

Danger:  
petroleum  
wastes

# IN THESE TIMES

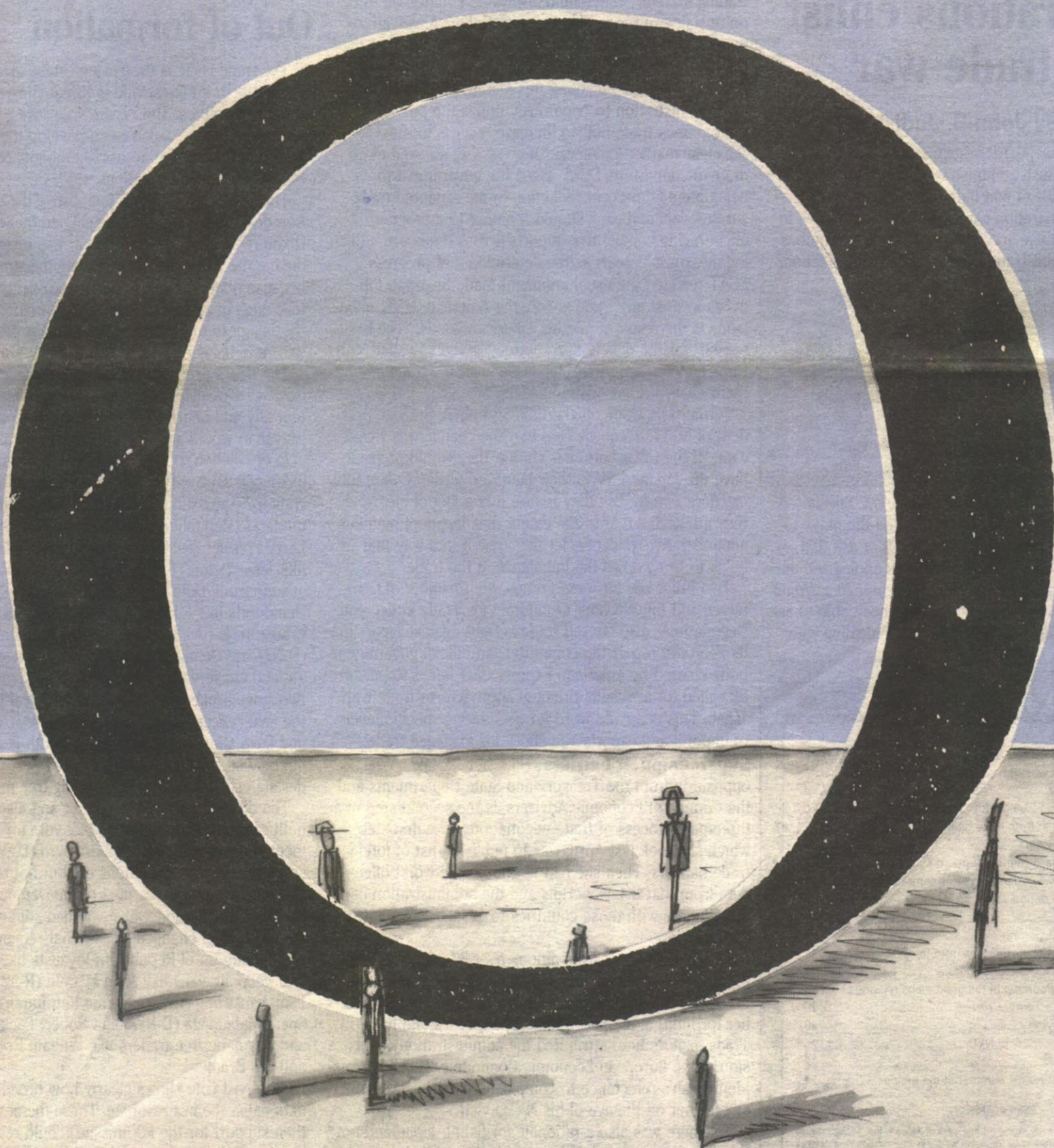
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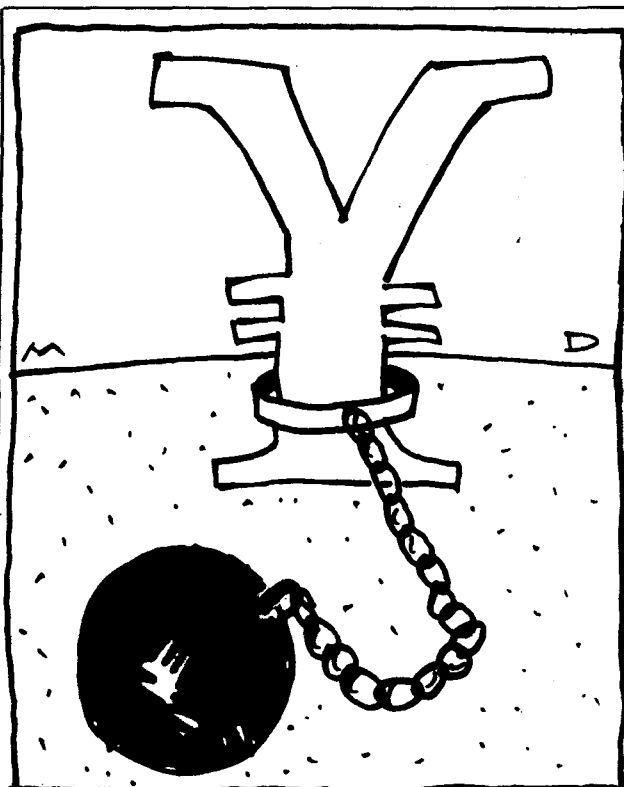
## NATO zeros in on the ZERO OPTION



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Diana Johnstone reports from Brussels, page 12





## Corporations enlist in the trade war

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

On May 27 the Bush administration announced that it was citing Japan, Brazil and India for unfair trade practices. If the administration cannot get these countries to mend their ways, then, according to last's year omnibus trade bill, the administration must impose stiff sanctions.

## INSIDE STORY

In typical Bush administration fashion, U.S. Special Trade Representative Carla Hills attributed the move to Congressional pressure. "We did not draft or ask that these types of deadlines be passed," Hills apologized during a May 28 interview on the *MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour*. "I might have different deadlines if I had been able to ask for a law with greater flexibility, but we're dealing with

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what we have." If the administration had failed to act, however, it would have faced stern opposition not only from Congress and organized labor, but also from American corporations and banks. The administration's action reflected, above all, a dramatic turnaround in corporate attitudes toward trade issues.

Business groups now fear the growing trade deficit more than they fear legitimizing government intervention in the economy. But their support of trade action could nonetheless open the door to labor-backed measures to restrict the export of capital and to require foreign corporations here to use American suppliers.

**Managed trade:** The main U.S. corporate trade lobby is the Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT). Its membership includes the largest American corporations and banks, including Ford, Boeing, Exxon, Citicorp/Citibank and Chase Manhattan. Founded in 1967 to lobby against labor-backed import quotas, ECAT has consistently opposed any legislation to protect American industries from foreign competition, open foreign markets to American goods or limit American corporations' overseas activities. In opposing these measures, ECAT resorted to a kind of "slippery slope" argument, in which *any* attempt to manage trade could lead to more ambitious measures that would undermine American capitalism and the world trading system. "They could always be counted on to be on one side of the argument," says Robert Angel, an expert on U.S.-Japanese trade relations who teaches at the University of South Carolina.

But at its annual meeting this March, ECAT called on the administration to "vigorously utilize the provisions of the omnibus trade bill" to increase "access to the Japanese market for American goods." In an even more dramatic departure, ECAT asked the government to negotiate a 50 percent reduction in the Japanese trade surplus. Japan, it said, should "commit to a program of encouraging competitive imports across the board, utilizing measurable goals as the determinant of progress." ECAT rejected the usual argument made by Japan lobbyists against any trade action: the American trade imbalance is the result of inferior American goods. "The basic reason" for the deficit, ECAT wrote, "is the so-called 'cultural' factor whereby the Japanese basically trade among themselves and not with outsiders."

Former U.S. trade official Calman Cohen, the vice president of ECAT, acknowledged that the change was significant. "If the CEOs had their choice, they would prefer to have the Japanese drop their managed trade," Cohen told *In These Times*. "But they realize it is a fact of life. Now they are saying that to the extent that Japanese maintain administrative guidance, let them use it in a way that helps to bring down the imbalance in the trade."

Two other key business groups, the Chamber of Commerce and the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations, also backed trade actions against Japan. In its February report the committee, an official government body chaired by American Express CEO James Robinson III, called for a "results-oriented approach" to trade with Japan. This is a code word for negotiating specific levels of imports and exports—in short, for managed trade.

**Supercomputer barriers:** Hills' action, taken over opposition from the Treasury and State Departments and the Council of Economic Advisers, is the second step in a three-part process of trade negotiations. The first step, which she took last April, was to publish a list of foreign trade barriers. Then she had to choose the worst offenders from that list. Now Hills and the administration have to negotiate with those countries to get them to remove their barriers.

Hills had to select from among over 36 countries cited in the April report. Some proponents of government action, including Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-MO), criticized her for limiting the list to only Japan, Brazil and India. Trade experts here attributed the administration's omission of the European Economic Community (EEC) to President Bush's reluctance to complicate alliance relations any further on the eve of his NATO visit.

But there was also a rationale for listing Japan and not the EEC. Japan excludes the most technologically advanced imports—those whose development has the greatest ramification for today's economies—while Western Europe excludes various agriculture products. Hills cited Japanese trade barriers against American supercomputers,

satellites, and wood and paper products (as opposed to unprocessed timber). The first two are high-technology items in which the U.S. has a considerable edge. For instance, the U.S. enjoys an 80 percent share of the world market in supercomputers, but only supplies 6 percent of the supercomputers purchased by the Japanese government and universities.

Administration actions against Brazil and India had less merit. Hills cited Brazil for restricting imports of both agricultural and manufactured goods, overlooking the fact that Brazil must run an export surplus to pay its \$120 billion debt to American and other Western banks. If the U.S. wants Brazil to drop its import restrictions, it should reduce its debt—something American bankers have proven unwilling to do.

Hills targeted India, which runs a small surplus with the U.S., for screening private investment and protecting its government-run insurance company. Rather than criticizing these practices, the U.S. would do well to emulate them.

The measures against Brazil and India reflect an old-style imperial bullying: do things our way or else. Measures against Japan reflect a welcome recognition that to compete with other advanced capitalist countries the U.S. must combine diplomacy and industry. □

## Out of formation

The trade issue is destroying established political coalitions in Congress and is threatening to realign American politics. The Senate vote May 20 on the U.S. arrangement with Japan to co-develop the FSX fighter plane completely cut across liberal-conservative and Democratic-Republican lines.

The Senate voted 52-47 to approve the administration deal. Opponents of the deal, led by Sen. Alan Dixon (D-IL), charged that Japan was insisting on producing the FSX rather than buying the similar F-16 because it wanted to learn how to overcome the American edge in aerospace technology. Dixon called on the Japanese to buy American F-16s in the same spirit that Americans now buy Japanese electronic products.

The deal's proponents, led by Sen. Robert Dole, argued that canceling the deal would anger an important ally and deprive the American economy of more jobs than would accrue from a straight sale of F-16s.

In opposition, Dixon was joined by liberals like Joe Biden (D-DE) and Paul Simon (D-IL), moderate Democrats like Sam Nunn (D-GA) and John Shelby (D-AL), moderate Republicans like John Heinz (R-PA) and Larry Pressler (R-SD), and conservative Republicans like Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Dan Coats (R-IN).

Supporting Dole and the administration were liberal Democrats like Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Alan Cranston (D-CA), moderate Democrats like Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Dennis DeConcini, and an array of moderate and conservative Republicans. Very roughly, the two sides broke down on early New Deal lines, with the East (except Republican New Jersey), the industrial and farm Midwest, and the Deep South going economic nationalist, and the West Coast, Rocky Mountain, border states, Florida and Texas going free market.

The differences became clearer and also even more politically promising in the 72-27 vote for an amendment sponsored by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) strengthening the conditions on, but not rejecting, the FSX deal. On this vote, most of the Democratic liberals and Republican moderates who had supported the administration changed sides. What remained was a rump coalition of Republican loyalists like Dole, Cold War geopoliticians like John McCain (R-AZ) and William Armstrong (R-CO), Pacific Rim importers like Spark Matsunaga (D-HW) and Robert Packwood (R-OR) and dogmatic free-traders like William Roth (R-DE) and Bill Bradley.

The Byrd vote shows clearly how broadly economic nationalist themes resonate. These themes (rather than support for the MX missile) could represent the key to a Democrat recapturing the South. But the voting results also raise the possibility that in 1992, the parties could nominate two candidates, George Bush and Bill Bradley, who don't have the foggiest understanding of the trade issue.

—J.B.J.



By Jim McNeill

## How Congress let spill a different oil disaster

**D**RAMATIC SPILLS LIKE THE ONE IN ALASKA'S Prince William Sound are the most visible sign of the underregulation endemic to the petroleum industry. But according to environmentalists, the unseen dumping of hazardous oil and natural gas drilling wastes poses an even greater environmental threat.

Because of a special congressional exemption, granted to the oil industry in 1980, all drilling wastes—no matter how toxic—are excluded from federal hazardous waste regulations. While the exemption saves oil producers millions of dollars in short-term cleanup costs, the rest of America is treated to spoiled lands, contaminated water and long-term risks to public health.

Such disastrous consequences were vividly outlined in a recent draft of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report examining drilling practices on Alaska's North Slope. The draft, leaked to the media this spring, is the subject of congressional hearings scheduled to begin this week. But environmentalists question whether either Congress or the administration, after a nearly a decade of accommodation, will find the will to stand up to the powerful oil lobby on the issue.

And until they do, oil producers will continue to handle their "undeniably dangerous wastes ... about the same way you deal with the garbage in the trash can next to your desk," says Will Collette, a director of Citizens Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste (CCHW) of Arlington, Va.

**Wasting America:** Dorrie Smith, an ocean ecology researcher for Greenpeace, says what is really worrisome about the exemption is the "enormous volume of dangerous wastes" involved. In contrast to the 4.5 million barrels of oil spilled into American waters each year, the U.S. petroleum industry and its waste management contractors dump more than 372 million barrels of oil drilling wastes into poorly regulated landfills or unlined pits throughout the major oil-producing states, according to the federal government. These wastes—which include drilling solvents, chemically treated muds and contaminated rock cuttings—are often laced with substantial amounts of carcinogens like arsenic, lead and mercury. A 1988 EPA study found that these wastes, even when handled in accordance with existing regulations, caused significant "damage to agricultural land, crops and livestock" and, of course, to the humans who subsist on them.

In addition to these wastes, the oil industry's drilling operations also produce nearly 21 billion barrels of harmful "produced water," a wastewater that contains diluted but still dangerous levels of the toxins found in drilling wastes. The produced water, tainted by contact with the extracted oil, is either reinjected into the ground or dumped, with little or no treatment, onto surrounding land and seas. A 1985 study by the Natural Resources Defense Council of wastewater discharges into the Gulf of Mexico found that the reduced oxygen levels caused by this practice inhibited "the development of [marine] populations," and warned that "severely depressed oxygen levels can eliminate all habitat for a population."

**Deadly but "non-hazardous":** The history behind the government's sanctioning of

this pollution is a tale of one of the most underreported regulatory failures of the '80s. It is the story of a powerful lobby, a weak-kneed Congress and a hobbled EPA—an agency transformed under Ronald Reagan from environmental protector into industrial advocate.

In 1980 Capitol Hill lawmakers sat down to determine how to apply the 1976 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)—which specifies provisions for the classification and treatment of the nation's wastes—to the oil and natural gas industry's drilling wastes. Oil lobbyists insisted that if the drilling wastes, some of which technically fell within RCRA's definitions as "hazardous" materials, were actually treated as such, the industry would be devastated.

The oil industry, which at the same time was facing billions of dollars in fines from the Department of Energy for price gouging, argued that any application of RCRA's hazardous waste regulations on drilling operations would threaten industry profitability, and thus lead to a significant reduction in America's domestic supplies of crude oil. Lawmakers, led by Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-TX) and other industry allies, accepted the industry's argument and inserted the special exemption into RCRA.

But Congress did not capitulate entirely. As a concession to outraged environmental groups, lawmakers agreed to reconsider the exemption once they had assessed the results of a specially commissioned EPA study. An EPA work group was charged with gauging the toxicity of the oil and gas industry's drilling waste and determining the validity of the oil industry's RCRA exemption. The work group was told to submit its report to Congress by October 1982. But, like so many EPA studies commissioned during the '80s, the report languished until August 1985, when the Alaska Center for the Environment successfully sued the agency for failing to meet the deadline, forcing EPA to resume its study.

**Don't worry, do studies, be happy:** In late 1987 the reluctantly revived work group finally released its preliminary report. The environmentalists' fears were confirmed. EPA discovered that petroleum production wastes contained human carcinogens such as benzene and naphthalene in concentrations that far exceeded the government's own standards for safe human exposure.

The work group advised EPA Assistant Administrator J. Winston Porter that the oil producers' blanket exemption from RCRA's hazardous waste regulations was neither environmentally nor economically justified. It urged Porter to place "associated wastes," a particularly toxic category of the industry's drilling wastes, under the domain of RCRA's hazardous waste laws.

The work group noted that the "mismanagement of these wastes resulted in some of the most severe cases of documented damage to human health" that it had uncovered. It argued that the environmental benefit would far outweigh the \$200 million to \$500 million annual cost to the industry—

whose top 22 producers showed a combined profit of \$4.8 billion in domestic oil and gas production in 1987, according to the Department of Energy.

But Porter—a 1985 Reagan appointee—overrode his staff's assessment. In the internal memo that killed the work group's recommendation, Porter did not dispute the evidence that associated wastes exhibited "RCRA hazardous characteristics." He simply claimed that "removing any portion of the exemption would be too disruptive and burdensome to both the regulated industry and the regulating agencies."

In its final report to Congress on the subject, delivered in July 1988, the EPA again admitted that RCRA's non-hazardous "standards do not fully address the specific concerns posed by oil and gas wastes." But the report, prepared under Porter's direction, told lawmakers that the agency could adequately tailor a patchwork of non-hazardous laws to the hazardous drilling wastes if Congress would commission yet another study of the oil and gas industry's disposal practices. Legislators, eager to avoid a fight with the industry, accepted the EPA's decision to retain the non-hazardous exemption for drilling wastes.

Porter still defends the decision. "It was a tough call," he says, "but rather than just saying 'let's be macho and do another level of regulations,' I thought [we should] do a more effective job of enforcing the regulations that [were] already on the books." While Porter acknowledges that there have been "some serious problems with oil and gas disposal practices," he says "a comprehensive state-by-state review program" established in the EPA's July 1988 report will provide the information necessary to "effectively fill the gaps" in current non-hazardous regulations.

**A different Alaska oil disaster:** The current condition of this review program, however, casts serious doubts on Porter's claim. On March 5 of this year, EPA staffers working on a review of drilling practices on Alaska's North Slope—the first review in a series of 14 mandated by the EPA's July 1988 report to Congress—leaked a draft of their findings to the *New York Times*. The draft documented numerous regulatory violations at the oil and gas industry's drilling and disposal facilities and charged that "careless management of chemical and oil wastes on Alaska's North Slope are severely damaging the delicate environment there."

A staff description of an ARCO drilling site provides a typical account of the violations encountered by the EPA field team. The team observed "a dark oily substance... leaching from the [unlined] reserve pit and into the tundra" and noted that "water around the site was covered with an oily sheen." Elsewhere the team found 55-gallon drums leaking directly onto the tundra, and untested and almost certainly hazardous wastes being illegally injected into the ground at a rate of up to 210,000 gallons per day.

Sylvia Lowrance, director of EPA's Office of Solid Waste, the office in which the report

originated, responded to the news leak by quickly distancing the agency from its contents. Lowrance, a career bureaucrat, did not take issue with the report's evidence, but claimed that it was "poorly written and organized" and did not adhere to the EPA's "objective" standards.

### Environmental procrastination agency:

At the same time, Bob Tonetti, acting deputy director of EPA's Waste Management Division and hands-on manager of the review program, issued an order stopping work on the entire 14-part review program.

Tonetti says that although the leak "called [his] hand one day early," the "stop work order had been planned for quite some time," and should not be interpreted as a punitive measure directed against the Alaska team. "The [entire review program] was stretched extremely thin" says Tonetti, "and we realized that we weren't directing this effort as closely as we ought to be."

Work has now resumed on the 14-part review, and Tonetti says the agency "is putting high-level attention" on the Alaska report and will continue to devote "greater attention at a higher level" to the upcoming reports on drilling practices in the lower 48 states.

But Ann Strickland, a former EPA enforcement officer now working with the National Audubon Society, is highly skeptical of Tonetti's version of events. "I worked at the agency for eight years," says Strickland, "and the only time I ever saw a stop work order issued was when the agency discovered that the [enforcement] expert they were using at Love Canal had forged his credentials." She believes Tonetti's action reveals an agency more concerned with "maintaining internal protocol" than policing corporate polluters.

And, according to Strickland, Lowrance's "extremely low-key" response to the draft's serious allegations raises troubling questions about EPA's willingness to "confront the industry not only in Alaska, but also in the other states" that the agency is slated to review. Without dependable information from EPA, Strickland questions "whether Porter's regulatory gaps can ever be filled." With the EPA "waffling" on its review, says Strickland, "it looks like the ball is now in Congress' hands."

**Back to Capitol Hill:** That ball is currently clutched by Rep. Thomas Luken (D-OH), chair of the subcommittee on transportation and hazardous materials. This week the subcommittee is scheduled to hold hearings on the violations revealed in the EPA's leaked North Slope report. The hearings, though focused on the leaked report, will also examine the EPA's July 1988 decision to uphold the exemption, according to subcommittee staffers. If Congress calls for the EPA to reconsider the exemption ruling, says Tonetti, "there are certainly people within the agency who still disagree with [Porter's] decision" and would press to have it overturned.

But environmentalists, worried that the subcommittee won't act, cite campaign contributions to Luken from executives and the political action committee of Browning-Ferris, Inc., a Houston-based firm with substantial interests in drilling waste disposal. In an effort to avoid bucking such powerful friends, say environmentalists, Luken and his colleagues may cling to J. Winston Porter's contention that changing the RCRA exemp-

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# INSHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

## With Christ on the dashboard

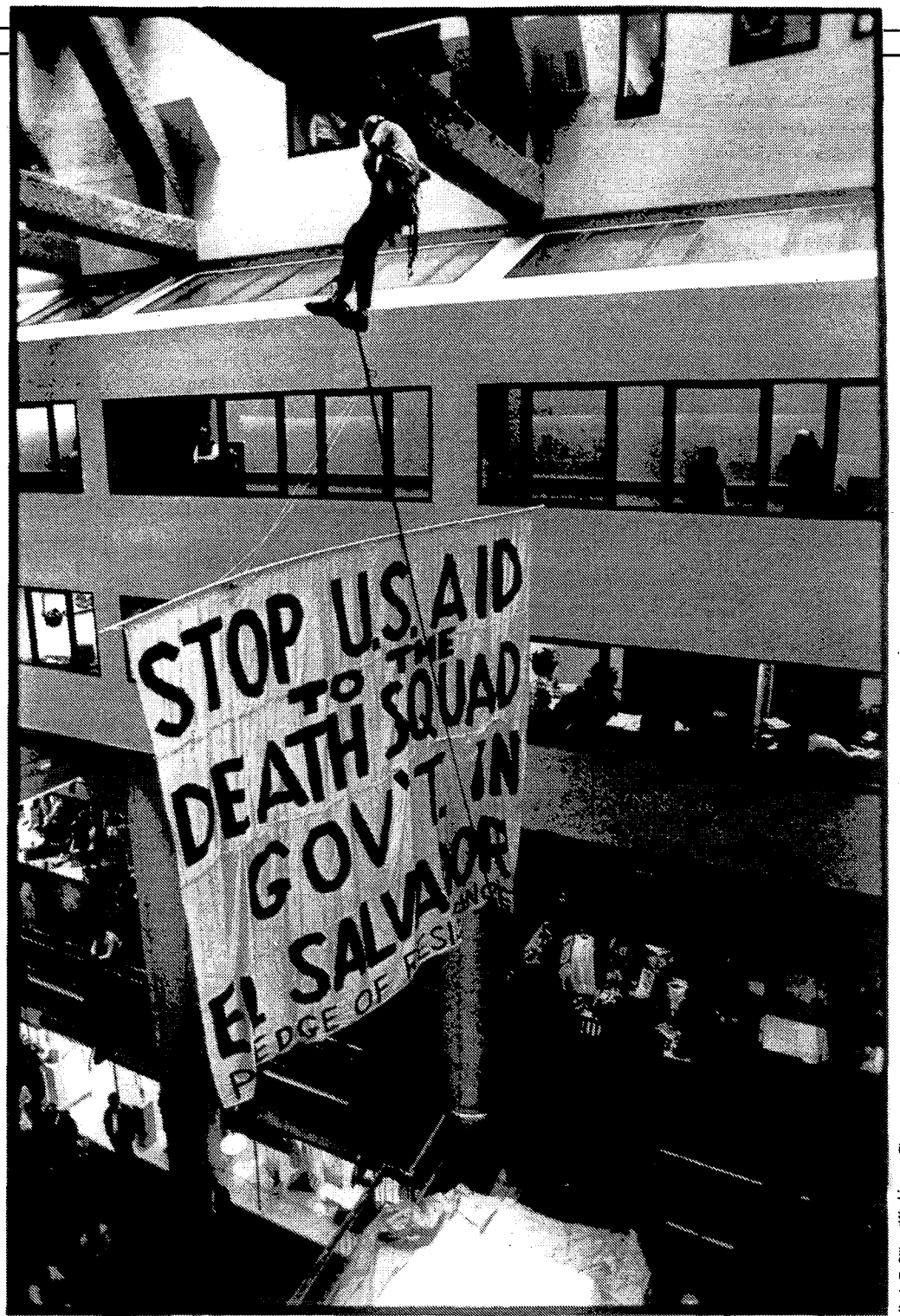
This year the Arizona Republican Party officially decreed the U.S. a "Christian nation," a republic that God had intended to be "based on the absolute laws of the Bible, not a democracy." The party passed this resolution at the urging of deposed governor Evan Mecham. But he is not the only Republican to hold such beliefs. Another is Biblical scholar and Ret. Gen. Jerry Curry, the man George Bush wants to put behind the wheel of the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration. Curry left the Army in 1984 to join the flock of televangelist Pat Robertson. Curry soon rose to be executive director of the reverend's Freedom Council. Fred Clarkson writes in *City Paper* of Washington, D.C., that the Freedom Council is a not-for-profit group that, in the words of Curry's predecessor, was until recently organizing in every U.S. congressional district to elect "a Christian president and a Christian government." The Freedom Council closed its doors in 1987 in the wake of news that the group was being investigated by the Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Commission for violating federal tax and election laws. Curry is no stranger to "Christian nation" ideology. Wife Charlene writes in her 1981 book *The General's Lady*, "The first time I heard Jerry present to an audience the whole concept of what he had learned in his research, the heavens opened up for me. The theme of his talk was that this is a Christian nation, and the intent of the founding fathers was that it always remain a Christian nation." Curry's nomination has two things going for it. First, Curry is black, and as such has the necessary color for media master Lee Atwater's plans to mix some pepper in the GOP salt. Second, Curry is backed by Sen. John Warner (R-VA).

## Sorry, no pictures

Flora and fauna around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant are having problems. The newspaper *Lenin's Banner* reports that in the wake of the April 1986 nuclear explosion, "some plants are exhibiting gigantism." For example, "giant green pines" have shot up in woods withered by the blast. Not faring so well are the local elk and wild boar, which are experiencing a population decline. The article denies rumors that rodents are proliferating around the plant, but adds that "there have been some genetic deviations noted in rodents around the zone."

## Naked truth

In Albuquerque, N.M., pacifist Don Schrader had spent the better part of a year picketing nearby Kirtland Air Force Base and Sandia National [weapons] Laboratory. He wanted to draw public attention to societal violence and the dangers of nuclear weapons. According to Schrader, nuclear bombs are already killing millions of people, "because billions of dollars, scientific brains and vast resources go to bombs instead of food, health care, housing, education and environmental protection for the poor." But no one paid any attention. This past April Schrader appeared as a guest on *News and People's Views*, a talk show on Albuquerque's public access TV station. The subject of the evening's discussion was violence in society and in the media. To address that topic Schrader appeared in the nude. The next day Gordon Sanders, director of the city Media Resources Department, recommended to the mayor that the city withdraw the \$210,000 it provides the community station each year. As Sanders explained to Rick Nathanson of the *Albuquerque Journal*, "This guy is sitting facing the camera, his legs spread and everything showing. No way can I say to taxpayers, 'This is a good use of your money.'" But the moderator of the TV show, Edite Cates, believes Sanders was focusing on the wrong area. Says Cates: "There is so much violence on TV.... There are rapes and murders, and we see specifics. The knife going in and the blood coming out.... Nobody makes a ruckus about that. Now we have one nude male sitting here, not doing anything erotic, and everybody is in an uproar. The point is we are uncomfortable with nudity, but we accept violence as a way of life." Schrader, who models for local art classes, says he appeared naked "because I believe in nudes, not nukes." As the controversy brewed, letters from clear-headed Albuquerqueans poured into the local papers. Lynda Lloyd had this to say: "The sight of a nude activist telling the truth is considerably less obscene to me than that of an expensively clad sophist spouting rhetoric. Perhaps [Mayor Ken] Schultz ... believes if he shouts loud and long enough about this inconsequential exposure we



Kevin T. Gilbert/Washington Times

**Read all about it:** Richard Ochs of Baltimore could have chosen no better place to post this message than Washington, D.C.'s National Press Building. To mark the recent inauguration of El Salvador's new president, Alfredo Cristiani, the Pledge of Resistance hung similar banners in San Francisco, Berkeley, Ca., Philadelphia, St. Louis, Minneapolis and Chicago. President Cristiani is a leader of ARENA, a far-right political party under the control of Roberto D'Aubisson, the alleged death squad operator.

## Dead Indians haunt American museums

American museums are once again closing ranks to fight newly proposed laws that would force them to return many human remains and artifacts to Indian tribes.

Several lawmakers in the 101st Congress are proposing new legislation that would, for the first time, give Indians claim to artifacts found on federal lands and return large numbers of the hundreds of thousands of skeletal remains and other artifacts held in the collections of museums that receive federal funding. Although Indian demands for "repatriation" of ancestral skeletons and sacred artifacts have been voiced for decades, the controversy is sending a shudder through the museum community.

For prestigious institutions like the Smithsonian, repatriation is an ethical issue that just won't go away. Indian complaints of inequitable

treatment and outright racism have put the institution on the defensive. Roger Buffalohead, director of the American Indian Learning Resource Center of the University of Minnesota in St. Paul, describes the Smithsonian as "America's biggest Indian graveyard." He questions the Smithsonian's right to keep its more than 18,000 Indian skeletons. "Eighteen thousand Indian skeletons in the Smithsonian is a crime. If they were 18,000 Jewish skeletons, they would be reburied by now—science be damned," says Buffalohead, expressing a familiar theme among Indians, who often say they don't care about scientific considerations when it comes to their ancestors.

Indian complaints stem from a long history of desecration of Indian graves by the U.S. Army in the 19th century. Also popular in the 19th and early 20th century were local historical society digs to collect artifacts from Indian graves.

More recently pothunters in Kentucky were arrested in 1987 for digging up hundreds of Indian graves. And in Kansas, Indian activists this

spring closed a tourist attraction where a farmer was charging \$1.50 to view the bodies in an Indian graveyard he had uncovered. Many of these skeletons and artifacts, including those collected by methods that would be illegal today, have wound up in American museums.

The bitter debate among Indian activists and museum administrators and archeologists focuses on two issues. One is the ethics of museums possessing "racially biased" collections of hundreds of thousands of skeletons, many of which can be identified by tribe and a few of which can be identified as individuals with living descendants. Add to that ethical issue the keeping of cultural and religious artifacts, especially those that are part of an "ongoing religious tradition." The second issue is the debate over the motivations and qualifications of those Indians demanding repatriation.

In an attempt to resolve some of the ethical problems, the American Association of Museums (AAM) recently enacted a policy that appears to tackle this issue head-on.



This new policy speaks of embracing new values and rejecting older unethical acquisition practices. Ceremonial objects "necessary to assure the continuation of the religious practices of a Native American group" would be returned. Illegally acquired objects would also be returned. As for "objects that have been legally and ethically acquired," the new policy says "museums should give serious consideration to requests for repatriation." Illegally acquired human remains would be repatriated "upon request of the legitimate party concerned."

But for some Indians the problem with the AAM policy is that the final decisions remain in the hands of the individual museums, which are not bound to the policy and which often disagree with all or part of it. The director of the National Congress of American Indians, Susan Harjo, says, "We need a national policy on repatriation of the remains. It doesn't work as well on a case-by-case basis. There is too much room for them to jerk you around."

In defending themselves against

accusations of racism, opponents of repatriation often challenge the credentials of their Indian critics. Museum administrators and scientists like the Smithsonian's curator of physical anthropology, Douglas Ubelaker, and the director of the Lowie Museum in Berkeley, Calif., Frank Norrick, consider Indian religion as a kind of "smoke screen for Indian political activism." Yet Indians are just as adamant in their assertion that repatriation, although it has a political side to it, is based on religious beliefs. When 16 stolen skulls were recently returned to the Blackfeet by the Smithsonian, the Indians performed elaborate purification rituals even before the remains left the Washington area.

Support for the Indian cause has been steadily growing. Much of that support is found in the U.S. Congress. Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA) has introduced a bill that amends the American Indian Religious Freedom Act to make it more enforceable. Rep. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) has reintroduced legislation that would repatriate all Smithsonian remains

identifiable by tribe that are newer than the year 1500. Rep. Charles Bennett (D-FL) has proposed a bill that would protect existing burial sites, including those on private land. And Rep. Morris Udall (D-AZ) has proposed changes to the Archeological Resource Protection Act of 1978 that would deem human remains, ceremonial objects and grave goods found on public lands to be the property of the tribe to which they are associated. Udall's bill would require an inventory be provided to tribes of the skeletal remains and sacred ceremonial objects held by federal agencies or federally funded agencies like the Smithsonian and private museums receiving federal monies.

In response to this mounting pressure, some museums have resorted to quiet negotiations with individual Indian groups. These talks have resulted in some repatriations, particularly from the Smithsonian, but many Indians remain unsatisfied, continuing to ask, "What about all the rest?"

—Rusty Middleton

## The mercenary messiah strikes again

What well-known national figure showed up recently in front of 700 beleaguered shipyard workers from Quincy, Mass., promising to arrange support for their union's plan to buy the shipyard, open it for business and put hundreds of workers back on the dock?

Here's a hint. Former baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth credited this person as being the force behind Ueberroth's attempted buyout of Eastern Airlines. That deal would have given Eastern employees 30 percent of the company.

Here's another hint. An article on this person in *Barron's* carried the headline: "Betrayer of Capitalism." Benjamin Stein wrote that other deeds of this "acknowledged Messiah" were "frighteningly subversive of the free market."

If you guessed Jesse Jackson, you're dead wrong yet kind of close.

The correct answer is Michael Milken. Milken is the Jesse Jackson of the business world: loved by supporters and denounced by detractors.

Milken is the junk bond king who, in the process of earning a \$550 million salary at Drexel Burnham Lambert in 1987—which would put him just above McDonald's 1987 profits—managed to get indicted on 98 criminal counts. Milken's brilliance lay in getting people with a lot of money to loan it to other people with less money who wanted to buy big companies. He arranged financing for billions of dollars in leveraged buyouts through the controversial financial instrument known as the junk bond.

What did Milken's transformation of corporate finance mean for

workers? As the free-market Stein at *Barron's* says, the "notion that he created any large number of jobs is, to put it charitably, hard to pin down. If Michael Milken was a savior, he was the savior not of ... the factory stiff but of the designers who sell fabric wallpaper at \$200 a yard."

So what was Milken doing speaking to 700 shipbuilding union members about helping them go back to work? And why didn't they batten down his hatches and push him out to sea instead of applauding him?

"I think he really has a feel for people, and that has come through in his dealings with us," Peter Gwynn, president of the workers' group the Massachusetts Shipbuilders Corporation, was quoted as saying.

When *In These Times* asked Gwynn about the appropriateness of having Milken arrange financing for a worker-ownership plan, Gwynn replied, "That's your controversy, sir, not mine.... Personally, I have nothing against junk bonds."

In fact, Gwynn seems to be a fan of both Drexel and Michael Milken: "I have nothing against people who want to invest in our shipyard.... Drexel and Michael Milken have taken a great interest in what we see as a true democratic worker buyout." Gwynn points out that Drexel has been involved with previous employee plans.

Last summer Drexel helped restructure Unimar, a small shipyard in Seattle, into an employee-owned company. In December 1988 Drexel funded a winning \$50 million bid by employees to purchase Omak Wood Products' lumber and saw mill.

When Gwynn's shipbuilding group was struggling last fall to come up with financing, Drexel approached the workers and asked if

they wanted help. Milken, says Gwynn, "was in the chain of command in Drexel who had taken a real interest in it." He was reportedly responsible for putting together the basic structure of the financing plan.

Drexel agreed with federal authorities to separate the indicted Milken out from certain business dealings. According to his personal spokesperson, Milken was involved in the Quincy plan and appeared at the union gathering as a "private citizen."

The obvious question is, why were Drexel and Milken so eager to help a worker buyout? Was Milken looking for ways to show to a jury that he is just as concerned about the common man as the rich man?

"People don't do things like that out of the goodness of their heart," admits Gwynn. The bottom line is still the bottom line. It doesn't matter who's arranging the buyout—whether it's the workers or financiers, Drexel still gets the commission and fees. The company's First Vice President Pat Flanagan refuses to disclose the amount of commission and fees Drexel received on any of these "private" deals.

But Flanagan did tell *In These Times* that Milken was "the leading force behind" Drexel's push into employee-owned restructuring plans. "Michael is a visionary and believes this is the next wave of capitalism."

This new messiah of worker ownership told the workers that "when the first ship rolls in here on October 1, I look forward to coming back and shaking your hands." That is, if he hasn't already been convicted and sentenced to some portion of a potential 520-year jail sentence for his previous deals.

—Mark Feinberg

will forget that it is he and his cronies who have been parading brazenly before us for some time." Mikey Stolebarger wrote: "Our mayor is seeking to prosecute a nudist who appeared on a community cable channel? Is this the same mayor who brought us the Miss Universe Pageant a couple of years ago?" And from Frank Scaltrito, "Oil spills, nuclear waste, mountains of non-biodegradable plastic, institutionalized lying by advertisers and politicians, people getting hacked up and shot nightly on TV, homeless human beings with nowhere to go and nothing to eat, savings and loan bailouts and other forms of welfare for the wealthy—these things I find obscene.... If this [controversy] wakes up a few of our good citizens to the hypocrisy and inconsistency of our society's values, I think that's great."

## Obscenity

Last year's top 20 Defense Department contractors each received more than \$1 billion from the Pentagon for weapons. According to the Council on Economic Priorities, of these 20 companies McDonnell Douglas of St. Louis received the most taxpayer money—more than \$8 billion. IBM was last on the list with \$1.06 billion. For those following the boycott of General Electric/NBC, it should be noted that General Electric/NBC, which ranks number five on the Fortune 500 list, received a \$5.7 billion boost from the Pentagon in 1988.

## Sticky fingers

Money is the glue that holds the "Iron Triangle"—Congress, the Pentagon and the defense industry—together. Jean Cobb writes in the current issue of *Common Cause Magazine*, "This relationship makes it possible for defense contractors to get the business they want, the Pentagon to get the weapons it wants and members of Congress to get the jobs and federal money they want back home." Last year United Press International's Greg Gordon reported that in 1987, \$230 billion, or about 82 percent of all Pentagon contracts, went to build military hardware in those states that had members on the Senate Armed Services Committee or the Senate defense appropriations subcommittee. According to *Common Cause*, 11 senators who sit on these two committees received, during their most recent election cycle, more than \$200,000 in political action committee (PAC) contributions and honoraria from defense contractors. Nine of them were Republicans. Six senators on these committees received less than \$50,000. Five of them were Democrats. The two senators who got the most from the defense industry are Pete Wilson (R-CA), who took in \$397,799, and John Warner (R-VA), who netted \$248,415.

## Still kicking up a fuss

Del-Aware, an environmental organization on the Delaware River, is inviting the public to "Steal This Picnic"—a celebration of the life of its departed member Abbie Hoffman. Stump speakers include poet Allen Ginsberg, lawyer William Kunstler, nuclear critic Ernest Sternglass and members of Hoffman's family. Music will be supplied by folk singer Richie Havens. The Bucks County Chapter of Vietnam Veterans of America will provide the protests. Bring a lunch and blanket, but no booze, on Saturday, June 10—the party lasts from 12 noon to 6 p.m.—to Washington Crossing State Park in Bucks County, Pa. In a fitting tribute to Abbie, Del-Aware had to go to court for permission to gather at the place where George Washington and his troops crossed the Delaware on Christmas night 1776 to surprise the Hessian mercenaries encamped at Trenton, N.J. The Washington Crossing State Park Commission originally had denied Del-Aware a permit to picnic. Chairwoman Ann Hawkes Hutton, who has spent 50 years on the commission, told Barbara Birt of the *Bucks County Courier Times* that while her commission does let families and Boy Scouts meet in the park, there is no comparison between those wholesome gatherings and the planned Hoffman celebration. "This is a totally different situation because of all the publicity about the man over the years and his being a fugitive from the law and the drug involvement—which is not new. This spelled controversy to us. It's a people's park, but it's a lawful people's park. We use George Washington's leadership as an example for all the young people who come here. Abbie Hoffman is not a person whose leadership is honored or should be honored by young people. It would be a desecration." As the *Courier Times* editorialized, "There is no doubt that the ragtag soldiers crossing the Delaware with George Washington that Christmas night would have more in common with Abbie Hoffman than with Ann Hawkes Hutton and members of the park commission."



By David Moberg

DETROIT

**A**T FIRST PHILLIP KEELING WAS DELIGHTED with the promises of his job at the new Flat Rock, Mich., Mazda plant: job security, a voice for workers and teamwork on the shop floor. He also looked forward to being part of a strong union, the United Auto Workers (UAW).

But two years working at Mazda changed his views. It also changed enough other workers' views that the local union elected Keeling president over the incumbent last

## LABOR

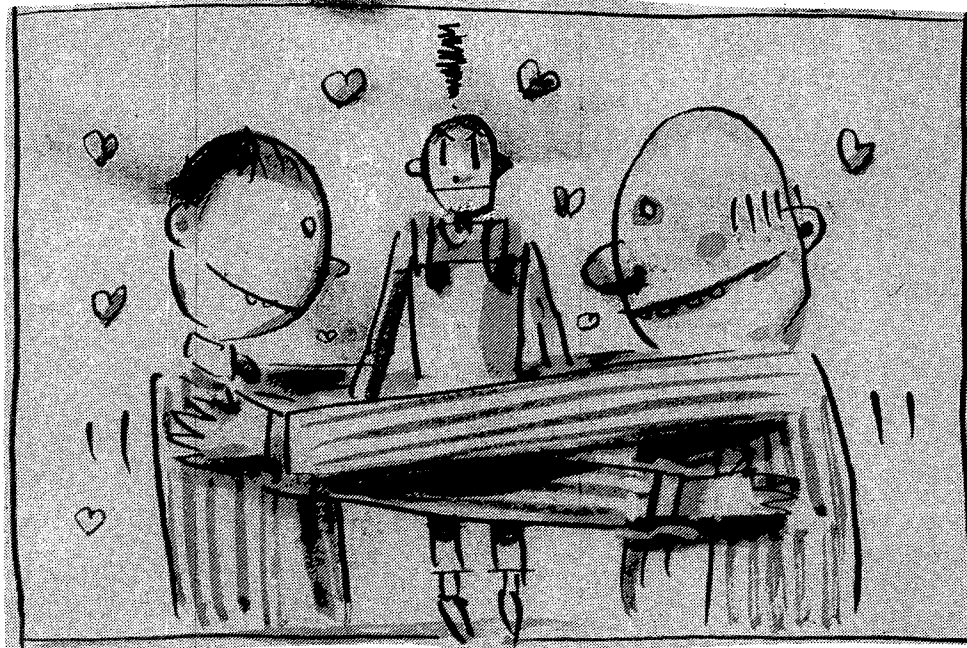
month, along with several other candidates on his slate. Keeling campaigned on both the failure of the "team" and the ineffectiveness of his union.

The one-big-happy-family joint-effort stuff is largely a myth," Keeling said, "and we must recognize that and take [management] on and file grievances instead of having one more joint task force or committee. After working there, you learn what a bunch of crap it is, the happy family, teamwork. I thought somebody had to expose this."

Keeling's election is part of the turmoil now raging within the UAW, much of it generated by conflict over the union's embrace of management "team" organization that promises cooperation, flexibility, security and worker input on many decisions but often delivers speed-up, stress, increased injuries, tensions among workers and a weakened union. Initially many workers liked the promise. Some cling to these new team approaches, because they are convinced that their plants would otherwise close. But others are convinced that it doesn't even provide job security. They point to the shut-down of team plants, like Pontiac's Fiero assembly operations, or the high levels of attrition forced on workers (forced out because of on-job illness and injury or tough policies on absenteeism, for example).

The UAW international leadership stumbled into its embrace of teamwork. Initially promoted by a few leaders in the '70s as a way of introducing Scandinavian-style workplace democracy, the concept was seriously distorted by the great auto industry crash of the late '70s and early '80s. Management increasingly demanded drastic changes in work rules (for example, minimal job categories or seniority rights), more flexibility in running the factories and greatly reduced workforces.

**Teamwork or no work:** The auto companies tried to implement the Japan management model of teamwork. Especially with General Motors, workers were often told that they had to accept these new contracts or the plant would be closed. The UAW acquiesced to the pressure, often actively supporting the new contracts. Rather than debating and then designing a new work organization, the UAW largely let the companies define and implement their own system. Critics contend that at the very least the union should have gotten some significant quid pro quo from the companies. Writers Mike Parker and Jane Slaughter described the new management style not as cooperation but as "management by stress," getting workers to implement their own continuous speed-ups. Ironically, UAW organizers at the non-union Nissan plant in Smyrna, Tenn., attack that plant's team management



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## Automakers' 'teamwork' sets workers to fuming

in nearly identical terms.

The problems of joint programs and teamwork have fueled a struggle within the union. Top union leadership has fought back in ways that threaten the UAW's claim to be among the most democratic labor organizations. "The union was very democratic as long as we operated within the international's assumptions," argues Eric Mann, a former active UAW member who now directs the Labor/Community Strategy Center. "The team concept has created this qualitative strategic debate, and that's provoked the most intense international [union] corporate intervention in local union life."

In 1986 Jerry Tucker, assistant director of the large Region 5 stretching southwest from Missouri to Texas, challenged an incumbent as the candidate of a grass-roots "New Directions" movement. Initially, Tucker said, it was a free speech movement calling for more democracy, debate and accountability

**The car companies' drive to adopt the Japanese management model has brought speed-up and stress instead of cooperation. It's also dividing workers from their union leaders.**

within the union. He was also critical of excessive union-management collaboration.

Tucker had to go outside his union to fight illegalities in the election that he lost by less than two-tenths of a vote. Eventually the Department of Labor forced a rerun of the election, which Tucker won last year by 32 votes.

Immediately the dominant administration caucus, which the watchdog Public Review Board described as running the union like a "one-party state," made plans to defeat Tucker. UAW President Owen Bieber told Tucker's regional staff that they answered only to him, not Tucker, and later actively recruited them to defeat Tucker. The admin-

istration caucus set up a special "Friends Social Club" dunning all international representatives for \$500 each, in addition to its traditional "flower fund," to which all staff are expected to contribute \$150 annually. These funds, probably generating well over half a million dollars, were to be used to fight Tucker and Dan Douglas, another New Directions candidate who had emerged in a Michigan region. Joseph Yablonski, Tucker's attorney and longtime defender of union democracy, charges that such implicitly coercive fundraising amounts to an illegal political use of the union dues money that pays staff salaries.

For the past couple of months UAW members have been electing delegates to their late June convention, when new regional directors and national officers will be chosen. In initial voting both Tucker and Douglas were running well ahead of their rivals, respectively international representative Roy Wyse and incumbent director Bob Lent, despite heavy administration caucus campaigning.

**Ballot beefs:** "We won the first major elections," Douglas said. "I think it's as clear as writing on the wall; when Lent was in jeopardy, the order went out: win at all costs. That's when we noticed increased intimidation." Tucker supporter Peter Downs claims that "when the slander campaign wasn't getting [the administration caucus] where they wanted, they decided to steal the election." Elections began to go against Tucker and Douglas, both of whom now appear to have far fewer delegates committed to them than needed for election. But in both cases they claim that disputed votes could easily turn the election around.

Tucker and Douglas claim that international union officers and representatives campaigned extensively for the administration slate on union time, and that there was extensive fraud: denial of challengers at balloting, ballot box stuffing, removal of a ballot box from the union hall and illegal expenditure of union funds.

They also claim that management colluded with the administration caucus to defeat them. Anti-New Directions candidates and staff were permitted to campaign freely

in many plants, even shutting down the line for 45 minutes in one to give a campaign speech, but Tucker and Douglas were kept out of most plants. New Directions people also charge that management used its mail and in-plant video systems to help the administration's campaign.

In what may have been decisive in both elections, the UAW mobilized extraordinary numbers of retirees to attend election-day meetings with top officials and Wyse or Lent, in nearly all cases denying Douglas or Tucker a right to speak. Douglas and Tucker were incorrectly accused of wanting to take away retirees' rights. In several big locals, Douglas and Tucker delegates won among active members but lost by less than the margin of the expanded retiree vote.

Tucker was actively rebaited (Wyse told one rally his first official act would be to take down the communist flag in front of regional headquarters) and Douglas was attacked as racist, pro-Klan and anti-busing in the heavily black Detroit-area Chrysler plants. Douglas is president of a large GM local in Pontiac, Mich., a largely white city where there had been an anti-busing movement. But Selwyn Rogers, an autoworker who founded the National Black Rank and File Exchange, investigated the charges among Pontiac black unionists and found them unsubstantiated. Chrysler workers were also persuaded that if Lent lost there would be nobody on the union's executive board who had originally worked at Chrysler, and Douglas was—inaccurately—described as an opponent of the Chrysler bailout.

**The long range:** New Directions candidates were outspent and overwhelmed by the power of a highly mobilized union staff and leadership often working with the apparent support of the companies. But they also made mistakes. They organized feebly in some locals, ran too many candidates in others and failed to prepare adequately for election abuse despite the 1986 election experience.

New Directions-style candidates made gains in some areas—reversing a defeat of three years ago in Van Nuys, Calif., winning at Mazda, electing significant numbers of dissident delegates in Michigan and Indiana as well as within Region 5. New Directions, which may formalize as a union caucus, could have 400 to 500 out of 2,000 delegates at the convention. Tucker seems ready, win or lose, to continue a long-term campaign to democratize the union. "This has to be a debate on the workplace floor and not just on the convention floor," he argues. "The only thing that will save this union is competent adversarialism."

UAW spokesman Frank Joyce dismisses the Tucker-Douglas charges as the normal complaints of losers after a typical "hardball" election and suggests that the New Directions movement represents the usual "political noise" of the UAW.

But the conflict over direction of the UAW—and how to determine that—seems much deeper. Ford committeeman Ron Maxwell became distressed after hearing his international representative complain that "the problem with the union today is that there's too much democracy." "I've read about Harry Bennett and his Ford goons [who intimidated early union organizers]," Maxwell said. "But now I've seen my own UAW do it to members just because they were dissidents and spoke out." □



By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

**F**OR RUTH MESSINGER, A STALWART OF UPPER West Side liberalism, these are the best of times and the worst of times.

On one hand, a little-known state assemblyman named Denny Farrell has dropped out of the race for Manhattan borough president, leaving her all but unopposed in the Democratic primary. Since Manhattan is essentially a one-party borough, this would appear to make her a shoo-in in November's general election. And since Farrell is black and has not hesitated in the past to play the racial card for all it's worth, it also means voters will be spared the spectacle of a Jewish liberal going head to head with a candidate speaking the language of black empowerment, with all the unpleasantness that implies—fears of anti-Semitism, the danger of a racial backlash, the incredible tedium of another spate of op-ed articles decrying the breakup of the black-Jewish civil rights alliance.

But it's also the worst of times—or at least the most uncertain—because even though the prize of the Manhattan borough presidency is almost within Messinger's grasp, no one is quite sure anymore what the borough presidency really means.

For years the city's five "beeps," as the *Daily News* calls them, were a kind of mid-level dukedom within the city's complex political landscape. Executives rather than legislators, they nonetheless exercised collective control over a quasi-senate known as the Board of Estimate. The board's veto power over budgetary matters and zoning changes gave the borough presidents visibility and clout and perhaps a leg up on the way toward higher office.

But then the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in April that giving Staten Island the same representation on the Board of Estimate as far more populous Brooklyn violated the principle of one man-one vote, and everything changed. The system fell, and although the dust still hasn't settled, it looks like New York will ultimately wind up with a more conventional form of city government, i.e., a stronger city council, a weaker mayor and precious little in between.

Consequently, Messinger now has the field to herself in the race for...no one knows. It's as if she had just hit one over the fence only to discover that home runs had just been ruled unconstitutional. The beeps could turn out to be ombudsmen, community spokespeople, glorified ribbon-cutters or figureheads rather like formal heads of state in a parliamentary democracy. If they can hold on to their sizable staffs and budgets, they will still be able to speak out on a broad range of issues. But unless they are able to hold onto a share of the budgetmaking process, it is another question as to whether anyone will actually listen.

For Messinger, it is undoubtedly frustrating, since she decided to run for Manhattan borough president only after being effectively locked out of the race for mayor, comptroller or city council president—all citywide posts with genuine political clout. Thus, while she has come a long way from her days as a gadfly city council member, she is still far removed from the reins of power.

**How did it happen?** Some of it is poor timing and bad luck, but some of it is also the case of a politician whose greatest strength is simultaneously her greatest weakness. Like many elected officials with a strong but highly localized following, Messinger is discovering that the same thing that gets her re-elect-

# Ruth Messinger rides out of the West Side



New York City councilwoman Ruth Messinger: trying to break out of the 'liberal ghetto.'

ed from year to year also keeps her from attaining higher office.

In Messinger's case, this is her base in a strip of land a half mile wide and approximately three miles long known as the Upper West Side. To call the Upper West Side a liberal bastion is an understatement; it is *the*

## NEW YORK

liberal bastion, a neighborhood defined since at least the '50s by a certain middle-class, democratic, secular-Jewish ideology. It is the kind of area where newsstands still carry the *Daily World* and the *New Left Review*, where the latest Soviet film releases still play to packed audiences and where Democratic presidential candidates routinely rack up 85-90 percent of the vote, with left-wing parties accounting for a substantial portion of the rest. Much has changed due to gentrification and an influx of yuppies with nothing on their mind except the hottest new restaurants. Yet thanks to rent-control laws and co-op conversion rules that encourage residents to stay put once they find a decent apartment, much has remained the same.

Messinger fits the local stereotype so closely it practically bears her signature. A New York native, she has lived on the Upper West Side her entire life except for her years at Radcliffe (class of '62) and a stint studying social work at the University of Oklahoma. She worked as a draft counselor during the Vietnam War, helped organize an interracial community school, and although partly sidelined by the task of raising two small children, joined with most left-liberals in supporting the local school board in the epic 1968-69 teachers' strike over community control of the public schools. In 1975 she ran for her neighborhood school board as a community-control proponent and won. In 1977 she ran for the city council and won again.

Since then she has made a name for herself as the most outspoken and hardest-working member of an otherwise undistinguished legislative body. She fought against Westway, as the expensive highway project along the Hudson River shoreline was dubbed, and

against some of the more grandiose real estate projects of recent years, such as Donald Trump's plan for three 120-story towers overlooking the Hudson, and Morton Zuckerman's bid for a 103-story high-rise on Columbus Circle. (It has since been scaled down to 58 stories.)

She has championed mass transit and bicycles over cars, campaign financing laws, and the rights of whistle-blowers to expose corruption and mismanagement in city agencies. When she put in an appearance to denounce corporate greed at a March 30 rally on the Columbia University campus in support of the Eastern Airlines strike, the local feminist contingent responded enthusiastically.

**Roadblocks:** So far, so very Upper West Side. But the problem with these positions is that while they still enjoy support in the old neighborhood, several of them have fared poorly outside of it.

After 20 years, for instance, school decentralization, an issue on which Messinger has staked her career, is widely acknowledged to be in big trouble. Thanks to a series of corruption scandals involving local school board members, several community school districts have been exposed as ridden with patronage and graft. Bureaucracy is worse than ever due to the extreme difficulty of administering 32 semi-autonomous school districts, while, judging by the 6 percent turnout in the latest school board election, parental apathy seems only to have increased.

Minority politicians still cling to school decentralization, because it is a source of patronage and power. Upper West Side liberals remain loyal to the Jeffersonian ideal of teachers, parents and neighborhood residents united in the common pursuit of an education for their kids. But outside the Upper West Side a somewhat less utopian view prevails, and people seem more realistic about decentralization's shortcomings.

The same can be said for Messinger's long-running campaign to rein in overdevelopment. Old-timers who live in rent-stabilized apartments no doubt appreciate her efforts to restrain the developers, but the yuppies

who have moved into the high-rises that have sprung up may be somewhat less grateful. So might the thousands of clerical workers and others, many of them black and Hispanic, who have found jobs in the office towers that have sprung up since the economic recovery of the late '70s despite liberal protests.

Trump may not be terribly popular in New York, but neither are the neighborhood activists who comprise the backbone of Messinger's support and whose attitude to development is a blanket "just say no." In the outer boroughs, where the big problem is not overdevelopment but economic shrinkage, the anti-development forces may as well be speaking another language, so incomprehensible are their ideas.

And then there is the race question, the stumbling block of all liberals. An enthusiastic proponent of black empowerment, Messinger supported the mayoral campaign of City Clerk David Dinkins, who is black, well before Dinkins himself decided to run. But Dinkins, a man who has raised blandness to an art form, has been noticeably cool to Messinger in return. As long as Denny Farrell was in the race for borough president, Dinkins refused to endorse her.

While gaining little among blacks, Messinger wound up scoring nothing with whites—outside the Upper West Side, that is—who cannot understand why they should vote for a mediocre candidate just because he is black. In an effort to curry black support, she has even opposed important reforms such as a city program to provide drug addicts with clean needles to prevent the spread of AIDS, a stance that may have earned her a few points with black politicians like U.S. Rep. Charles Rangel of Harlem—an anti-drug zealot for whom clean needles are poison—but only left her liberal admirers confused.

Thus Messinger's efforts to break out beyond the Upper West Side "ghetto" have mostly come to naught. In Manhattan and a few middle-class areas of Brooklyn, she continues to enjoy an enthusiastic following among whites, but elsewhere in the city, voters continue to give her the cold shoulder. □

IN THESE TIMES JUNE 7-20, 1989 7



By Alisa Joyce

BEIJING

IMAGINE AN EPIDEMIC OF MANIC DEPRESSION. Imagine a city of 12 million people experiencing mass mood swings from incredulous euphoria and exhilaration to terror, bitter resignation and furious anger—all within the space of a few days, and sometimes in the course of a single day.

For the last few weeks Beijing has been a city ruled by emotion and dreams. The stereotypically passive Chinese once again have stunned the world with their hidden passions.

While a ferocious power struggle was

## ASIA

fought within the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party leadership, the masses took to the streets to create a party of their own. They demanded change and, most importantly, their right to be listened to by their government. But their mass movement merely pushed forward pre-determined political purgings within the leadership's top echelon. The "Patriotic Democratic Student Movement" that overwhelmed the city and nation in mid-May has, in the short term at least, helped to produce a worst-case-scenario political realignment within the government. The movement was used among power brokers as an excuse to clean house inside the leadership, and those responsible for the house cleaning remain deaf and blind to the peoples' pleas for progress.

Or so it seems.

China never ceases to amaze, and throughout the past seven weeks of demonstrations, hunger strikes, mass movements and martial law, the only thing that is certain is that no one knows what will happen next. True power in this country is played out on a stage on which the curtains are always drawn. There are no audiences, no public critics, only an after-the-fact press release to explain the final act.

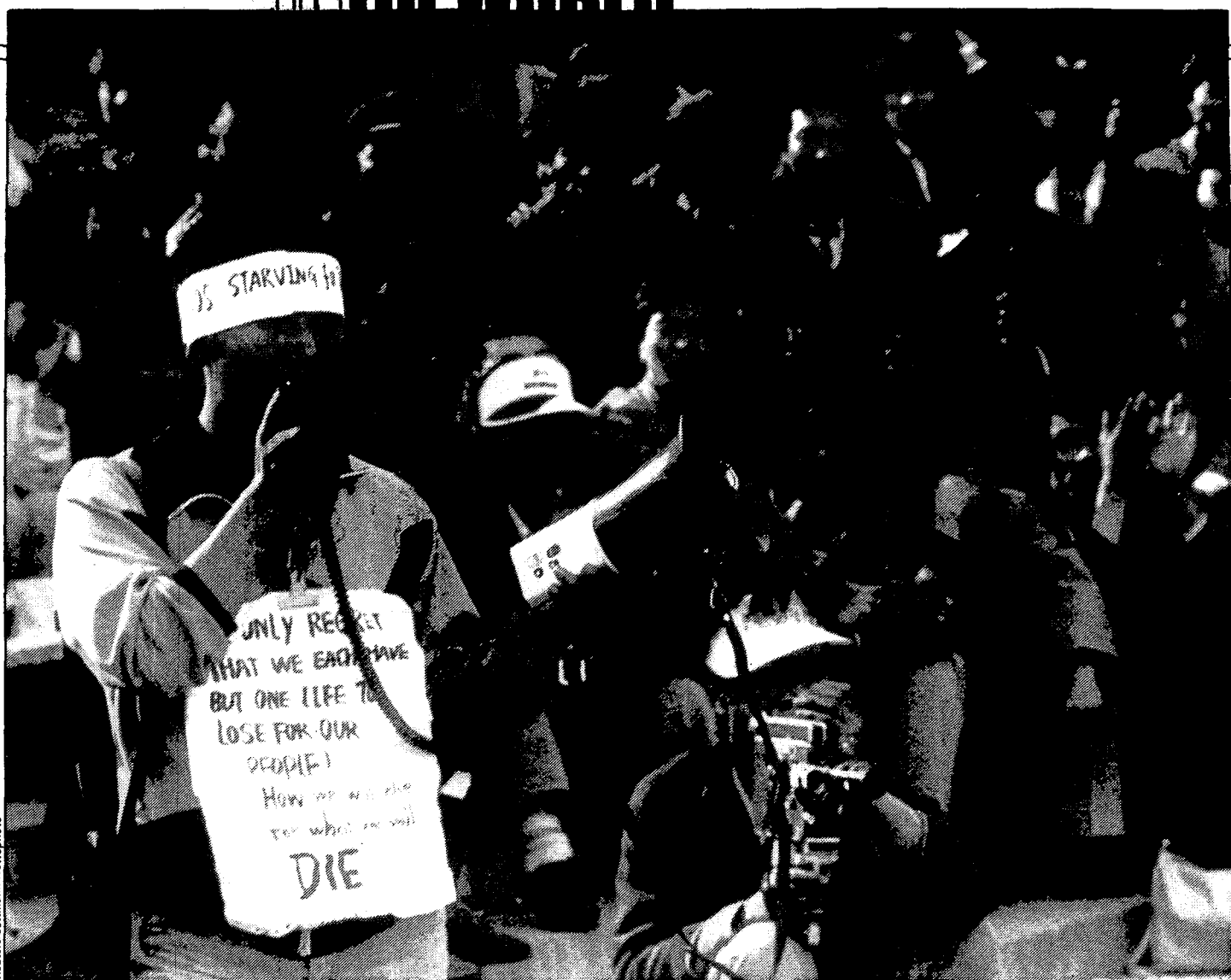
Yet it felt like a revolution here for a while. It seemed less like a clichéd "awakening" of political consciousness than like a sudden explosion of reality. Chinese people have always had a great deal to gripe about: poverty, corruption, inflation, repression, deception. But few expected such a passionate, peaceful and determined effort to redress these wrongs.

Bits of news from the last few weeks in Beijing tell only a fraction of the story of China's most recent revolution. This movement doesn't even have a real name yet—a title to mark its passage. Yet it is important to detail the events of those heady days in mid-May, while, as the whole world watched, China for a brief moment almost became a people's republic.

**May 15:** When student broadcasters on Tiananmen Square announced that the welcoming ceremony for visiting Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov had been moved from the square to the airport, there was a sense of disappointment, but also of growing jubilation. While students had anticipated a colorful confrontation between protestors and the motorcade, many realized that this was the first sign of the students' strength.

There was fear, however, that the government had "lost face" and would therefore retaliate against the students with greater ferocity. Yet the hunger strikers were proud. "The government may lose face," said Lai

8 IN THESE TIMES JUNE 7-20, 1989



A student leader on a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square borrows a phrase from the American Revolution.

## China's fleeting life as a real people's republic

Zhixiong, a student at the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, "but the Chinese people have gained face."

The square was festooned with incredible banners and slogans. It was a festival in the making—a hot, sunny and very happy democratic carnival. One Western reporter was so taken with the enthusiasm and idealism of the crowd that he likened it to the '60s "Power to the People" campaign in the U.S. Student leader Cao Shu of Beijing University had heard of the phrase, of course, but he dismissed the analogy. "The government cannot give power to the people," he explained, "because it is the people who have granted the government power."

**May 16:** The numbers of supporters who marched to the square to support the core group of hunger strikers swelled into the hundreds of thousands. Intellectuals from institutes and universities from all over the city marched; journalists from the *People's Daily*, the Communist Party newspaper, marched. An old woman marched, holding up a plate on which was written: "My children are hungry. What are Deng Xiaoping's children eating?"

The students were holding out and were greatly encouraged by the throngs of supporters. But tension was growing, as was the fear that the government had decided to just ignore the millions on the square. There was talk of suicide if the government didn't agree to a dialogue soon. People were frightened that the tinderbox of defiance would explode into massive work strikes and violent rebellion. A rumor spread through the city that

two hunger strikers had died. People were nervous and very angry.

"There is a very clear boundary for most Chinese," said editor Zhang Xiaogang of the English-language *China Daily* that day. "If no blood is shed, they can still wait and see. If there is blood, people will no longer wait."

**May 17:** At least 1 million people flooded into Tiananmen Square: workers' unions, flight attendants, social scientists, factory laborers, soda pop dispensary workers, the China Travel Service, the staffs of most newspapers and the central TV station. The main street leading to the square was mobbed for miles. All over downtown Beijing, crowds were singing the "Internationale" and chanting "Long live democracy!" The square and its immediate environs looked like the scene of a rock concert that went on for too long.

Few people in Beijing went to work that day, and after a few hours it became commonplace even miles from the center of town to see honking brigades of commandeered trucks and buses covered with banners and filled with shouting, laughing, chanting demonstrators. Everywhere they went, people applauded, cheered and flashed "V" signs of solidarity. The city stopped functioning, and Beijing's citizens just gave in to the new atmosphere of unrestraint.

Rather than the usual evasiveness and hesitation, workers and other Beijing residents were eager to talk to foreign reporters wherever they met them. "This government is corrupt," shouted one hard-hatted construction worker. "We need a new one." A factory worker, surrounded by a crowd of

gawkers, told an American TV crew that "a man should not act like a slave. It is time Chinese people dared to speak out."

**May 18:** Another million people marched this day. Beijing almost resembled those old Cultural Revolution newsreels, as every blank place in the city was covered with pro-student, pro-freedom, pro-democracy banners.

China Central Television (CCTV), the government-financed and -controlled broadcasting network, looked like the headquarters of a revolution. A huge banner swung from its lofty spire, and more banners and flags were strewn throughout the halls inside. More than 1,000 employees of CCTV had marched to the square earlier that afternoon and then returned to broadcast footage of the Beijing rebellion to the whole nation. Late that night CCTV broadcast a dialogue that had taken

## For the last few weeks Beijing has been a city ruled by emotion and dreams.

place earlier in the day between hard-line conservative Premier Li Peng and student hunger strikers. The broadcast itself spotlighted the extraordinary new freedoms enjoyed by the Chinese press. In the broadcast, however, the premier revealed his anger, impatience and complete lack of sympathy for the movement. It was a sign of things to come.

**May 19:** Until this day the government had taken no action either for or against the hunger strikers. The workers had joined the movement, and Beijing citizens were arriving at the square in droves. Even party officials and government functionaries were carrying banners and shouting slogans. In dozens of other Chinese cities, students and citizens



were demonstrating. Gorbachov had left China and the center—China's governmental authority—seemed unable to hold.

In the pre-dawn hours of May 19, Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang visited the students in the square. Reportedly with tears in his eyes the pro-reform leader told the students: "I have come too late."

The students agreed. Their would-be hero had waited too long, and now the movement had grown beyond even his capacity to control. Zhao meant something different by that statement, however. He was trying to tell the students that he had lost and that there was no longer any hope for reconciliation between the men who had taken control of the government and the people lining the square.

All those gathered in the square were afraid to sleep that night because of the continuous broadcasts over the government loudspeakers of a harsh speech by Li Peng warning that the social "turmoil" caused by the student movement required the People's Liberation Army to come in and restore order. "It is hopeless," said a female medical student attending the hunger strikers on the square. "We are really very angry—we want to kill Li Peng." A rumor, later confirmed, spread through the square that Zhao Ziyang had resigned.

And a new Chinese phrase was learned: "martial law." Troops were reported to be ringing the city.

**May 20:** At 10 a.m. on the tired, dirty square, the imposition of martial law was announced over the loudspeakers. Just before the announcement, five military helicopters buzzed the square in formation. Although frightened and intimidated, the students greeted these emissaries with shouts of welcome. "Why are they here?" a scared reporter asked. "To support us," responded a grinning student who knew she was wrong.

The terror had begun, yet the streets and square that morning were filled with marchers, trucks crammed with flag-waving protesters, "V"-waving motorcycle brigades and even one huge bulldozer packed to the brim—even its enormous shovel—with banners and people.

Blood was anticipated to flow that night, and the entire city began its 24-hour-a-day vigil. Students drove around the city all day, chanting: "Arise, unite and protect the students," and all through the town people were shouting "Down with Li Peng," "Li Peng resign!" The people barriers went up on every intersection leading into Beijing—as they had the night before—to keep the soldiers from entering. The citizens were organized by students who formed "peaceful willing-to-die brigades" and proclaimed their willingness to lie down before the tanks.

**Shifting gears:** For three nights the vigil went on, and it was astonishing to witness the heretofore docile citizens of Beijing take on both their government and their army. There was a nearly universal feeling of anger and disillusionment with a people's government that called in the army to quell the people. "This is a *patriotic* movement," everyone insisted. "How can the government refuse to listen?"

Martial law was unenforceable in Beijing under these circumstances. It was almost laughable—the all-powerful Chinese government was unable to martial the law, as the people continued to dance in the streets. The People's Liberation Army at first balked at having to blast through barricades of their countrymen to put down a movement led by their daughters and sons.

The only way for the hard-liners to regain even a semblance of control was through propaganda. And thus the first and most important steps taken after the announcement of martial law was to send in troops to occupy and "protect" both CCTV and the *People's Daily* compound.

As the media lost its independent voice, and as the newly ascendent hard-liners regained their national outlets of expression, the propaganda machine began cranking out its persuasive new line. Zhao Ziyang—along with the students, the intellectuals, the moderates and the reformists—had lost, and the long-retired geriatrics of the communist revolution reared up in support of Comrade Deng Xiaoping and his protégé, Li Peng.

China's leaders are masters of thought control once they are certain of how thoughts are to be controlled. When power was firmly in the hands of one faction, the political re-educators could go to work. The

first lesson taught to the Chinese people was about the troops called in to enforce martial law: they had "suffered" as they waited without food or sleep in their trucks outside Beijing; they were the "people's army," here to "protect" the people. Martial law is good was the next lesson. Then came the lesson about the "turmoil" caused by the student movement that could have sabotaged China's economic development. The final lesson outlined Zhao Ziyang's "mistakes" in trying to persuade the politburo to be conciliatory to the students.

As *In These Times* went to press, the flags and banners above the square hung in tatters and the stench of the hunger-strike-turned meager-sit-in was reminiscent of a disaster zone. Yet martial law remained unenforceable. The blood boundary had yet to be crossed, and the new leadership remained cowed by a justifiable fear of the public reaction to an obvious crackdown. While it was

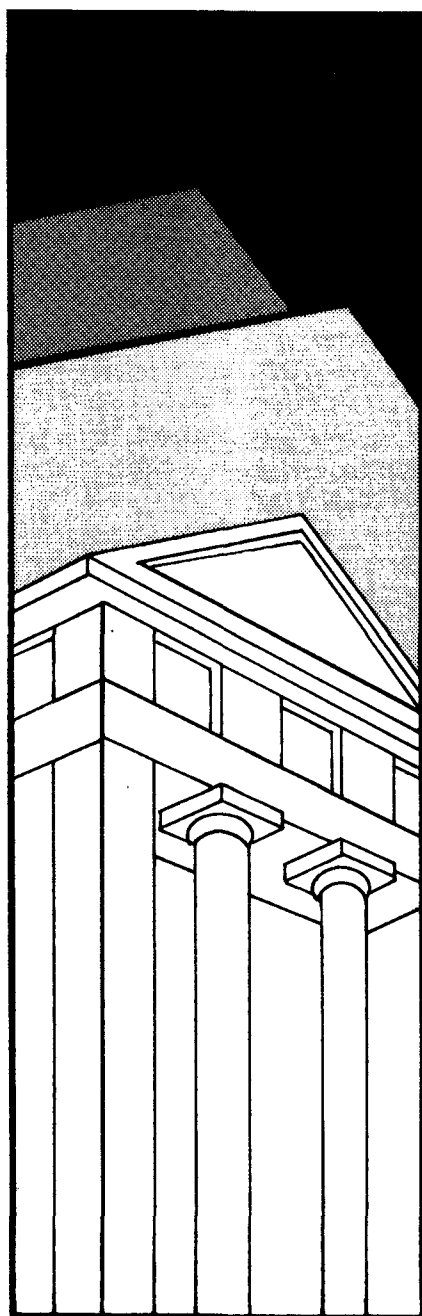
widely known that Zhao has resigned, the government had yet to make a public announcement on the subject.

Have the students lost? Is China retreating into a regressive dark age of police-state politics? It is too early to know the ending of this story. The Chinese, when they retreat into passivity, like to call these kinds of wild swings a movement of "two steps forward and one step backward." The carnival that was the "Patriotic Democratic Student Movement," however, revealed a nation that was just learning how to party. Whatever the government now decides to preach, it is obvious that the Chinese people who participated in this movement in spirit as well as in body remain convinced that they were right.

As a now bitter Zhang Xiaogang explained, "The moderates always seem to lose the battles, but they always win the war." □

Alisa Joyce writes regularly for *In These Times* on Asian affairs.

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By Gordon Lewis

EAST BERLIN

**D**URING HAPPIER, SIMPLER TIMES, EAST Germany's ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) was fond of flaunting the slogan "Learning from the USSR means learning to win." But today the propaganda department must be wishing it never invented the phrase. "Learning from the USSR" has become a standard refrain of the opposition in East Germany (GDR), and in their mouths it is a particularly sarcastic critique of the ruling clique's policies—or lack of policies—that have resulted in social, economic and political stagnation.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov has cast a dark shadow over the aging politburo's waning years. The party leaders are well into their 70s, and they know that it is only a matter of time before they must bow out and make way for a new generation. But if they go, they want to go in style, leaving a lasting legacy and a firm foundation on which their successors can build. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* call these plans into question. Looking east, Erich Honecker and his semi-Stalinist clique of cranky old men see economic turmoil and a freedom of expression that challenges the legitimacy of party rule. Everything they have worked for in the last 40 years is being called into question. As Margot Honecker, wife of the party leader, put it in private conversation: "I would never have thought that the counterrevolution would come from Moscow."

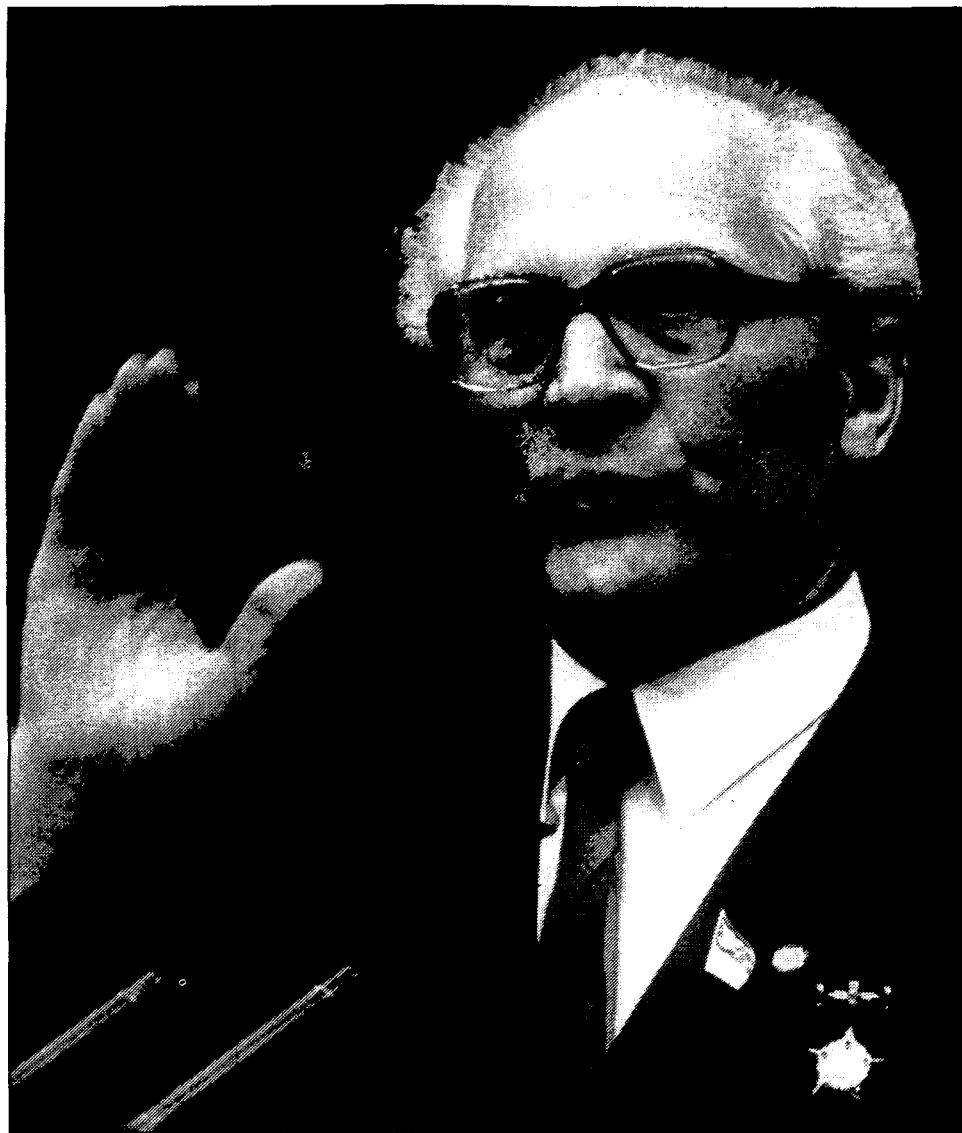
The politburo members are well aware that should Gorbachov's reform policy succeed, members will be forced to make arrangements with the new *zeitgeist*. Until such a success is assured, they prefer to wait and see what comes. Should Gorbachov fail, the leaders can say they were right all along. On the other hand, if Gorbachov is victorious, politburo members can retire and leave the problems to the next generation. They see nothing to be gained in taking the initiative and perhaps jumping the gun.

This "wait and see" approach runs deeper than the party leadership. The whole mid-level bureaucracy has been infected with the inertia virus. Although many in the party apparatus are open to change, they fear that triggering a reform debate could leave them out in the cold should the new leadership stick to the current course. Unlike in other socialist countries, there is no discernible reformist wing in the East German party. Critical circles are virtually non-existent. Instead, the party hacks tell the leadership what they want to hear. This in turn reinforces the leadership's almost complete lack of touch with realities in the GDR. Production figures and election results are manipulated. Whole city blocks are renovated in anticipation of a politburo visit. For party leaders, the country is one big "Potemkin village."

**Gutless panderers:** The party apparatus' job of shielding the leadership from social reality was made easier in the past by the passivity of the general population. Rolf Henrich, a party functionary turned dissident, wrote that "a lack of civil courage characterizes the educated classes in this land." He sharply criticized the "cowardice of our intelligentsia." Protestant Rev. Rainer Epellmann, a leader of the peace movement, sees the situation in similar but less harsh terms: "The GDR citizen, whom the state treats like a child, resigns rather than revolts. He succumbs to hopelessness and, seeing no way out, seeks to emigrate."

Emigration is a hotly debated issue in dissident circles. While people wait for permis-

## Old and in the way, the Honecker regime hangs on



Communist Party head Erich Honecker: now the threat is from the East, not the West.

sion to leave, sitting on suitcases anywhere from five weeks to more than five years, many feel an urge to justify their decision to emigrate. Why are they leaving? Says Epellmann: "This is not India or Bangladesh. There are no plagues, epidemics or hunger.

### EAST GERMANY

The reasons are primarily economic. What they don't realize is that they, too, are responsible for the conditions under which they live. What have they done to change their country? Nevertheless, despite this obvious appeal to stay in the country and become active, the church supports the requests of citizens wishing to leave, believing freedom of movement to be an inalienable right.

The Protestant Church is the rallying point for all critical elements in the GDR. As the

**Once slavish in their devotion to the Soviets, East Germany's Communists now wish the winds of change wouldn't blow their way.**

only truly independent institution in the country, it is exempt from laws prohibiting public meetings without prior state consent. A broad spectrum of groups, from ecological to homosexual initiatives, have access to church facilities. The groups, approximately

500 throughout the country, are generally lumped together as the peace movement. But as Epellmann explains: "The peace movement is not one big coordinated effort. The groups are independent and rarely see each other. Although many say I am an important figure in the movement, that would be misleading. There is no Lech Walesa here in the GDR."

Although the opposition movement in the GDR is still in its infancy when compared to those in other socialist states, experiences in the Soviet Union, Hungary, Poland and, of late, China, have given the population new confidence in expressing its views. This in turn has made the government nervous. Leaders are not sure how to balance their waiting tactic with the needs of the moment. Politburo members lack the delicate touch necessary to walk such a fine line. They are philistines with very narrow horizons. Unable to think conceptually, they have fallen back on nationalism as a remedy to growing discontent. One SED functionary commented to *Der Spiegel*, "Of all people, those who have swallowed every piece of shit from the Soviet Union are suddenly discovering the national way." Epellmann adds, "I don't know 10 people here who have pride in their country." Joachim Balkow, a former English teacher at the Institute of Economics, says, "You can't artificially produce national feeling. It doesn't take only a generation or two, but centuries to develop."

**Banning the bolshies:** Just how helpless the government is in combating change is best illustrated by the *Sputnik* affair. In its November 1988 edition, this Soviet magazine published an article criticizing Stalin and the

German communist party's tactics in fighting Hitler. The government responded by banning the magazine. This led to open outcry, even within the party. As one low-level functionary asked, "What are they going to ban next? *Pravda*?"

The *Sputnik* affair was a major embarrassment for the East Berlin regime. Instead of stifling criticism, the move provoked open discussion of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. It was one of a series of political blunders over the past year—the arrest of peaceful demonstrators, the roughing up of Western journalists, the expulsion of high school students from the party youth organization for criticizing a military parade. In each of these cases, the government action appeared rash, much in contrast to the methodical oppression of 10 years ago. The security services seem nervous and overreact, a sure sign of weakness. Slowly but surely it has begun to dawn on the general population that it is the government, not the people, that has its back to the wall. The fear of reprisals that has played such a great role in keeping criticism to a minimum is losing its power as it becomes clear that without the support of Moscow the only result a tough policy can have is strong international criticism.

Such bad publicity is just what Erich Honecker seeks to avoid. The aging party leader has become increasingly concerned with staking out his place in history. He wants to be remembered as the man who lent the "bastard" GDR international respectability. Nothing would boost his ego more than a state visit to Washington or London. But he knows this will never happen if East Berlin's human rights records remains blemished. Domestic and foreign policy are working at cross-purposes.

**Floored at the polls:** The bankruptcy and instability of party rule were glaringly illustrated at municipal elections on May 7. For the first time, citizen groups monitored the voting process and came up with some remarkable results. Official sources claimed a 98.78 participation rate with 98.85 percent of those who went to the polls giving the uncontested "unity list" their vote. Statistics provided the author in East Berlin tell a different story: participation between 75 and 85 percent with 7.5 to 15 percent rejecting the state candidates. Election watchers who monitored the counting at local voting places found no errors at this level. Clearly the results were manipulated from above. Epellmann and other church and peace movement members have filed criminal charges against the election commission.

The election results show that after decades of apathy, the East German population is awakening. Taken together, dissenting votes and no-shows amount to nearly 40 percent of the electorate, and this despite party intimidation. Those who headed for the voting booth instead of merely folding their ballots and putting them in the boxes were duly noted by the authorities. In the end the pressure was to no avail. The party had no recourse but to falsify the returns. The true nature of the system stood naked for all to see.

The GDR is an anachronism in the socialist world. The leaders know it, and the people know it. Things must change, and they will. Just how fast and far-reaching this process will be is still up in the air. As Epellmann says, "It all really depends on us, the people. May 7 was an important step in the right direction."

**Gordon Lewis**, based in West Berlin, writes on German affairs.



# Bush administration on arms control: "vision thing" is nowhere to be found

**T**HE CASUAL OBSERVER MAY BE FORGIVEN FOR not noticing that the era of George Bush's grand vision is upon us. Since his election, President Bush has been promising a "strategic review" that would outline his approach to arms control and security in the age of Gorbachov. But instead of outlining a comprehensive program, the president is letting his policy trickle out in a series of lackluster speeches.

Bush's speech at Texas A&M University on May 12 was supposed to be the cornerstone of the strategic review. But instead of acknowledging the profound changes underway in the Soviet Union and the Cold War's apparent demise—not to mention explaining how the U.S. plans to act on those changes—Bush retreated into the comfort of well-worn ideas and listed five "positive steps" Moscow had to fulfill in order to be welcomed "back into the world order."

How the planet's second most powerful country could be outside the "world order" in the first place was just one of the many mysteries of Bush's speech. The president also failed to mention that on all of the fronts where he demanded "positive steps" from Moscow—reducing military forces, allowing self-determination in Eastern Europe, resolving regional disputes, respecting human rights and cooperating in solving global issues—the Soviet Union is already making progress, sometimes moreso than the U.S.

The administration has "been going through the motions, but what are the specific proposals?" asked John Isaacs, the legislative director for the Council for a Livable World in Washington. "It's gone from the ridiculous to the farcical."

And it's not just liberals who are annoyed with the White House. Ronald Reagan, Sam Nunn and others have complained about the administration's slowness. Former U.S. Ambassador to West Germany George McGhee was quoted by the *New York Times* as saying, "That speech Bush gave on East-West relations [at Texas A&M] was something I wouldn't have wanted my daughter in college to turn in."

Perhaps responding to such criticism, a subsequent Bush speech did concede that Soviet reform holds "tremendous promise for international stability."

**What is Bush's plan?** Lacking any overall "vision thing," as the president once called it, the Bush strategic policy must be found in speeches, statements and the first Bush defense budget, which is the only official indication of the new administration's direction on many arms control issues that the White House has not otherwise directly addressed. Drawing from these sources, *In These Times* examined the administration's positions on several key areas of disarmament.

• **START:** The most important and promising area of arms control is reduction in strategic arms—generally speaking, weapons that can reach one superpower's territory when fired from the other superpower's territory. After his election, Bush suspended the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) pending the outcome of the review. When Secretary of State James Baker went to Moscow in early May, he said the U.S. would be ready to resume talks in Geneva this month. But even then he did not say what the Bush administration planned to do once the talks resumed.

President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachov had already worked out the basic framework

of an agreement to cut intercontinental missile forces by 50 percent; it is up to Bush to do the fine-tuning. The draft agreement set limits of 6,000 missile warheads and air-launched cruise missiles for each side. Exactly what combination of air-, land- and sea-launched missiles would be cut was left open to negotiation.

Not only are numerous aspects of a START pact unresolved between the two superpowers but the administration still has not reached resolution within its own ranks. For example, the official U.S. position is that mobile strategic missiles should be banned—the U.S. currently has no such system while the Soviets have two. But the Bush budget calls for the mobilization of two U.S. missile systems—the Midgetman, which has yet to be deployed, and the MX, which is currently based in non-mobile silos (see *In These Times*, February 15). The START position and the budget request have not been reconciled.

Betty Lall of the Council for Economic Priorities in New York said, "I anticipate more opposition [to the administration's Midgetman/MX plan] from Congress than

## Instead of outlining a comprehensive strategy, President Bush has let his policy trickle out in a series of lackluster speeches.

from the Soviets since the Soviets want to be allowed two mobile missiles." Congressional opposition is indeed building, not only because of political considerations but also because of the cost. Bush is "still acting like there is no budget deficit," Lall said.

Lall, who recently concluded a review of the START talks, said another area where divisions exist within the administration and with the Soviets is sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). Since these missiles can carry nuclear or conventional warheads—thus making verification extremely difficult—"there is controversy within the administration whether they should be allowed at all," she said. The Soviets want to limit nuclear SLCMs, but some Bush officials, notably National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, want to ban SLCMs entirely.

The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) continues to be a stumbling block to disarmament, because the Soviets insist that the anti-missile program cannot go ahead while the START negotiations progress.

• **Star Wars:** SDI continues to perform the dual purpose that the Reagan administration intended for it: draining off taxpayer money into corporate coffers and acting as a land mine for any arms control treaty that crosses its path.

SDI's budget has continually been cut over the last few years, and the defense budget calls for further cuts. "Instead of spending \$40 billion over the next five years on SDI, we'll spend about \$33 million," Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said in April. Star Wars may be dying a slow death of a thousand budget cuts, but it can still do a tremendous amount of damage to arms control. In the Texas

speech, Bush repeated the standard Reagan/Bush line that "our objective will be to preserve our options to deploy advanced defenses when they're ready."

While no one in the Bush administration is still promoting the Reagan fantasy of a total space shield, ongoing Star Wars research threatens both the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which bans space-based anti-missile systems, and the informal ban on anti-satellite weapons (ASATs).

ASAT development on both sides has been halted since 1982 through unofficial agreements and a congressional cutoff of funds. But the Defense Department's budget for Star Wars includes money for a technology called "brilliant pebbles," a plan in which 10,000 to 100,000 small rockets would be spread around space in order to attack enemy missiles in flight. And as Richard Garwin, an adjunct professor of physics at Columbia University, pointed out, brilliant pebbles has "a much greater anti-satellite capability than an anti-missiles capability." Thus billions could be spent on a technology that will succeed only in destroying treaties while leaving missiles intact.

• **Forces in Europe:** In March NATO and the Warsaw Pact began a new series of negotiations in Vienna aimed at reducing the two blocs' military strength in Europe. It was a promising beginning with both sides presenting similar proposals. The two plans called for cuts in weapons and materiel that would leave both sides at roughly the same levels—around 10-15 percent below current NATO levels. This is especially encouraging since the last set of talks on this issue dragged on fruitlessly for 15 years, largely because of Moscow's disingenuousness about the size of its military strength.

But now the Soviets are moving so fast that the U.S. cannot keep up. While the NATO plan calls for force cuts that would require major changes in the Warsaw Pact and minor changes for NATO, the East's proposal is a three-stage plan that would leave much of Central Europe demilitarized and both blocs stripped of their conventional offensive capabilities. NATO is proposing nothing nearly so ambitious.

There have been amazing gaps in the NATO plan. NATO has always based its arguments on the alleged massive Soviet superiority in troops in Europe, yet there was nothing in March's original NATO plan about eliminating troops—the position was that the troops would be withdrawn with the equipment. NATO also wanted to keep air and naval forces out of the negotiations.

But under pressure from the European allies, Bush has softened his stand. At the NATO summit in Brussels last month, the president told European leaders that the U.S. would propose measures at the Vienna talks that would reduce U.S. forces in Western Europe by 30,000 to a total of 275,000. (The Soviet Union would have to make bigger cuts to reach 275,000.) The U.S. proposal would also limit combat aircraft. This plan does not resolve the issue for NATO of U.S. reluctance to deal with divisive short-range nuclear forces—a stand that is causing more problems within NATO than between the blocs (see story on page 13).

• **Non-proliferation:** The spread of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery

vehicles are grave problems—and the administration has taken some clear positions on them. Bush wants the international community to find ways to stop the proliferation of long-range missiles, chemical weapons and nuclear weapons. This crusade would be more effective if it were more even-handed. The administration is far more vocal about China's export of ballistic missiles than it is about Israel's missile program. Bush wants to ban chemical weapons, but the U.S. program continues. And in forums including the United Nations, the U.S. is constantly protecting South Africa from too-strong condemnations of Pretoria's nuclear

## DISARMAMENT

weapons project.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has played a major role for the last two decades in keeping a lid on the spread of nuclear weapons. While not all major powers have signed the treaty (France, China, South Africa and India, among the most prominent), it is still held to be the best multilateral arms control agreement in existence. The NPT comes up for review next year, and the treaty's non-nuclear parties want to see the U.S. practice some of the restraint it preaches. In particular, they want to see some progress on a nuclear test ban, which is universally seen as the most important arms control step possible. But a test ban is not a Bush priority.

**Underdeveloped plan:** The bulk of the Bush initiative is designed only for the East-West dichotomy, an answer to Gorbachov's agenda. But, with the exception of non-proliferation issues, Bush has not addressed the Third World, except in terms of what the developing countries should do to be less threatening to the U.S., not vice versa. Third World countries are particularly concerned about the U.S.' insistence that virtually all air and naval forces are off-limits in arms control negotiations. The U.S. has a history of using these highly mobile forces in Third World intervention. If these forces are not needed to combat the Soviet Union, developing countries ask, where will they be used?

But that question is not even a part of the mainstream debate in the U.S. Stating the case this year against banning all sea-launched cruise missiles, *Newsweek* said, "If all the SLCMs were banned, the U.S. Navy could face threats from Third World countries that will be buying cruise missiles within the next decade." The double assumption that the U.S. Navy has to be near Third World countries and that those countries will be armed against the U.S. shows that whatever strategic review eventually emerges, it will not go far enough.

Jim Wurst writes regularly on disarmament and security issues.

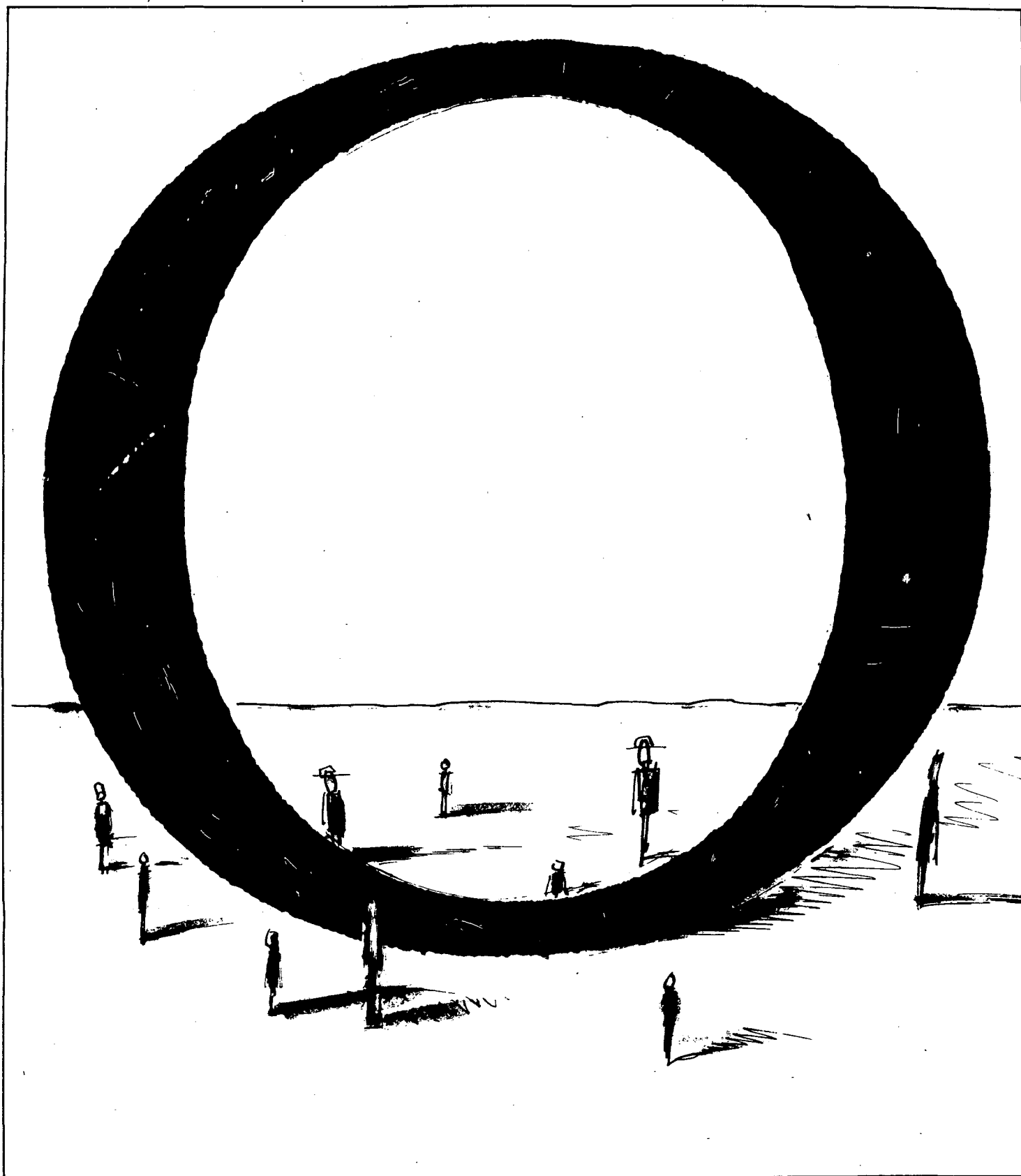
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On the face of it, the NATO Brussels compromise calls for more disarmament faster. On closer examination, the "more" is all demanded of the other side, while the speed-up could well be a ploy to trip up the whole process.

Attention has focused on three points:

- **Troop reductions.** As part of the Vienna negotiations on conventional forces in Europe (CFE), NATO will propose cuts leading to a ceiling for U.S. and Soviet army and air force personnel stationed outside their own territory in Europe of about 275,000 each. This would mean the USSR would have to demobilize about 325,000 men, the U.S. only about a tenth as many.

- **Speed-up.** Bush said the U.S. wanted to reach agreement at Vienna in six to twelve months. This was justified by rapid progress made since the CFE talks opened in March. However, by suddenly agreeing to a standing Soviet demand that aircraft be included—but in limited categories that could prove hard to define—Bush added a complicating factor that experts thought would be sure to drag out the talks beyond the short deadline suggested.

- **SNF negotiations versus Lance "modernization."** The U.S. will be willing to enter into negotiations to achieve a "partial" reduction of U.S. and Soviet short-range land-based missiles "to equal and verifiable levels" only after (1) a Vienna conventional forces treaty has been both concluded and implemented, and (2) the Soviet Union has unilaterally reduced its short-range missiles to the NATO level.

The optimistic call for a rapid conclusion of the Vienna talks was obviously meant to seem to satisfy the German demand for an "early" start to SNF talks. Time will tell whether this was a bluff. It is an open invitation to British and French obstructionists to slow down the Vienna conventional talks, most likely over aircraft definition.

The word "partial" was the only word underlined in the text. Asked about a "third zero option," Bush said it was not mentioned because "there won't be any." He stressed that he could not foresee any time when American nuclear missiles would not be stationed in Europe.

Yet Genscher was also claiming victory. "A commitment to modernization without simultaneous negotiations has turned into a commitment to negotiations without simultaneous modernization," he said.

Green Party Bundestag spokesman Helmut Lippelt commented that the Bush proposal was "praiseworthy but transparent." Tying SNF to success in the Vienna CFE talks is an obvious attempt to prevent a possible and necessary third zero option, he said.

However, the obvious attempt will not necessarily succeed. The optimistic deadlines for them will be running out in a West German election year. Will voters look to the Christian Democrats or to the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to make sure that opposition to new nuclear missiles is kept up? Just before the summit, West German Admiral Elmar Schmäling predicted that next year, NATO policy may be an election issue for the first time. Probably the real crisis in NATO lies in the future.

**Gorby goading:** The proposal for Soviet demobilization was greeted gleefully by opponents of mutual disarmament, who saw deep troubles ahead for Gorbachov in the problem of finding housing and jobs for so many men in the midst of an already troubled economic restructuring. Cold War devotees can hope that Soviet army officers will send

## NATO allies zero in on the zero option

By Diana Johnstone

BRUSSELS

**N**ATO IS LESS AND LESS A MILITARY ALLIANCE and more and more a rough political game. That is what it has always been, but it is the loss of credibility of the Soviet military threat that has brought out into the open NATO's fundamental political nature.

The 40-year-old alliance is a political game on three levels. First, it serves to bring the concentrated pressure of the member states to bear on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Every bit as important, it is a field for power struggles among member states. Finally, each national leadership uses NATO as a factor in its own domestic politics.

The compromise at the May 29-30 Brussels NATO summit works on all three levels. With the military "threat" vanishing, NATO baldly reasserted its political pretensions to Westernize Eastern Europe. The concessions to Soviet demands for further disarmament were formulated with a view to causing domestic problems for Mikhail Gorbachov. It enabled the nuclear powers who dominate

the alliance, the U.S., with its British and French sidekicks, to interfere deftly in German domestic politics. And it allowed George Bush and just about everybody else

### ARMS CONTROL

to go home to a hero's welcome for having "saved NATO."

**Ploys are U.S.:** Right up to the eve of the summit, the U.S., seconded by Britain and, more discreetly, France, seemed to be on a

**The Brussels compromise on short-range nukes was due in part to the refusal of the Germans to continue to rubber-stamp the whims of Washington.**

collision course with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) over the so-called "modernization" of the Lance nuclear missiles stationed in Germany. The last thing Germans want is another batch of nuclear missiles on their territory. In opposite corners stood Margaret Thatcher, demanding an immediate decision in favor of the new missiles, and West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, calling for "early" Soviet-American negotiations on short-range nuclear forces (SNF) that could make "modernization" unnecessary. The nuclear powers all opposed such negotiations, claiming that the West could not be defended in case of a new "zero option" removing all nuclear missiles from Central Europe.

That there was any compromise at all was a victory of sorts for the Germans, whose growing attentiveness has put an end to the old rubber stamp reaction of the European NATO allies to U.S. proposals. The anti-missile movement has brought democratic scrutiny to bear on military planning as never before. The Brussels compromise is a product of this scrutiny. It cries out for more.



Gorbachov rather than themselves into early retirement. The Pentagon reportedly believes it is physically impossible for the Soviet Union to scrap all the weapons mentioned by Bush within the time period set by Bush himself.

Instead of a zero option, NATO hard-liners would like to go back to the "zero sum game" against the Soviet Union.

The summit agreement allows Bush to ask Congress to fund development of the Lance successor. Word circulated that the U.S. plans to install 997 of the new missiles in Europe. German defense officials would rather put nuclear warheads on so-called air-based systems, using standoff cruise missiles fired from aircraft. With a longer and more flexible range, able to strike targets in the Soviet Union, these systems would in effect replace the land-based cruise and Pershing II missiles banned under the INF treaty. The NATOcrats apparently plan to work out a mix of the two systems, masked as a "reduction" because the new systems would be fewer in number than the old ones. They have to be: the newer the technology, the higher the maintenance costs.

## NATO is here "to keep the Russians out, the Americans here and the Germans down." —Lord Ismay

NATO's right to judge internal affairs in Eastern Europe is cloaked as concern for human rights. The hypocrisy becomes more glaring as political freedoms are obviously greater in the Soviet Union than in China, accepted by Washington as a strategic ally.

The real political purpose of NATO is more complex than merely converting the Soviet bloc to the marvels of Western capitalism. In partial contradiction to this goal is another, geostrategic, purpose: to keep Europe and especially Germany divided, and above all to prevent any rapprochement between a Social Democratic Germany and the Soviet Union. The second part of this purpose—preventing rapprochement between a Social Democratic Central Europe and Communist Eastern Europe—was always implicit. By selling Truman on the "Iron Curtain" in 1945 and 1946, Winston Churchill got the U.S. to take up Britain's traditional policy of keeping the Continent weak and divided, in contrast to Franklin D. Roosevelt's "one world" policy. Konrad Adenauer did not mind setting up the FRG without predominantly Protestant East Germany that would have shifted the political balance in the FRG away from his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) to the SPD. But Stalin's treatment of Social Democrats made any rapprochement purely theoretical. Since Gorbachov, however, a peaceful rapprochement between German Social Democracy and Eastern Europe appears as a real possibility, and indeed the best hope for Europe and even the world.

**Commerce vs. conflict:** This possibility is based less on "ideology" than on hard facts such as West Germany's material prosperity and geographic vulnerability. West Germans have found foreign trade an altogether better means of extending influence than war. This contrasts with the U.S., which still views war as something it can do far from home, and whose postwar militarization has weak-

ened its competitiveness in non-military fields. Britain and France also depend on arms export and nuclear power status to maintain what President Francois Mitterrand calls "rank in the world."

The function of NATO is to oppose and sabotage German-Soviet rapprochement by all possible means. The means include keeping East-West relations militarized around a policy of "competitive strategies" that keeps advanced technology arms-oriented and thus banned from export to Eastern Europe. Another is to influence West German domestic politics in favor of pro-NATO forces.

Thus the Brussels compromise was crafted to help Chancellor Helmut Kohl's CDU win re-election in the crucial elections late next year. By raising the prospect of a Vienna conventional arms accord within six months to a year, Bush has dumped the NATO arms issue right into the 1990 German electoral campaign.

At a dinner for Bush in Bonn right after the Brussels summit, Kohl launched into his election campaign, stressing the importance of German-American relations. The Christian Democrats hope to use the rift and its healing to present themselves as the party that can keep up the partnership with the Americans. The U.S. is a vastly more important market for German exports than the entire East, both now and in any calculable future. "We are no wanderers between two worlds," said Kohl, stressing that the FRG was "solidly anchored to the West."

Significantly, the recently defeated CDU mayor of West Berlin was invited to the Bush dinner, but not his successor, Walter Momper, the Social Democrat heading the "Red-Green" coalition there. Exclusion of the West Berlin mayor was a political low blow. Momper, who speaks excellent English, could have given Bush a less pathetic version of "Western anchoring" than Kohl. This is because the SPD and the Greens accept the FRG's social, political and economic integration into the West as a fact of life, just as they accept the existence of two German states as a fact.

**Bewailing wall:** On May 25 the Green vice president of the West Berlin assembly, Hilde Schramm, caused right-wing representatives to walk out when she refused to open the session with the usual ritual sentence: "I declare our inflexible will that the [Berlin] Wall must come down and Germany with its capital Berlin be reunited in peace and freedom." She explained that of course she wanted the wall to come down, but could not reconcile the formula with her political consciousness. (Schramm, 52, is the daughter of Hitler's architect and armaments minister Albert Speer and is herself active in the peace movement.)

In the U.S. and especially in France, the West German peace movement has often been portrayed as a disguised nationalist tendency toward German reunification. On the contrary, people in the peace movement, the SPD and the Greens have been the first to grasp that "reunification" is an empty slogan encouraged by the Western allies just so long as it serves to arouse fears and military countermeasures in the East that make reunification impossible.

This diagnosis has been confirmed by the spate of American columns, inspired by the fight against "Genscherism," accusing the West Germans of sneakily seeking reunification. Many conservative Germans who had taken their American friends seriously were shocked by Jim Hoagland's column in the *International Herald Tribune* last January ac-

cusing West Germans of being used to "speaking blatant untruths" because the FRG was "founded on the fiction that the occupying Western powers of France, Britain and the United States share the goal of the reunification of Germany in a foreseeable future."

The cat is out of the bag. German conservatives are deeply disillusioned with the Americans. But, as elsewhere in the world, they may use the American connection against their domestic political rivals.

The capsule summary of NATO by its first general secretary, Lord Ismay, that the alliance was to "keep the Russians out, the Americans here and the Germans down" has come into wide circulation. The German-American split in NATO is not only about missiles, Robert Leicht observed recently in the liberal weekly *Die Zeit*. The task of NATO was, he observed, a "double containment" meant "to contain not only the Soviet Union but also the Germans."

In a university debate last March, the SPD's leading Ostpolitik specialist Egon Bahr said the U.S. "will remain in Europe for an unforeseeable length of time, and physically so. The Soviet Union has recognized that security questions in and for Europe cannot

be solved without and against America. We won't be left alone in Europe with the Russian bear," he told French scholar Alfred Grosser. "You should not forget one thing: The Americans will never allow Europe to fall under the determining influence of the Soviet Union. They would rather destroy it."

Keeping this possibility in mind is the only conceivable purpose of the nuclear missiles the Americans, British and French are so intent on keeping stationed in Germany.

Finally, there is another reason blocking total nuclear disarmament in Europe. It was mentioned by top Soviet adviser Vladimir Zagladin on a recent visit to Bonn. "To be honest," he told German peace activists, "if Europe has no arms and the rest of the world has them, that won't do either."

The industrial North has sold its development model and its surplus weapons to the poor countries of the South. Missile, nuclear and other weapons technologies are proliferating. So are inequalities and desperately unsolvable problems. NATO is doing its best to miss the chance to move decisively in an East-West framework toward a general disarmament before the problem shifts from the more manageable East-West framework to unforeseeable North-South conflicts. □

## The Catch-22 of short-range nuclear weapons

The tensions developing between the U.S. and Soviet Union over the issue of short-range nuclear weapons in Europe give a taste of what could happen if the arms control train jumps the track again.

Where short-range weapons fit into the current arms control agenda is causing well-publicized problems for NATO in which West Germany wants to negotiate away the nuclear weapons with ranges under 500 kilometers, while the U.S. (with British and Dutch support) wants to introduce a new missile into the NATO arsenal—and onto West German soil.

The new missile would replace the aging—but not obsolete—Lance. Lance's replacement is not yet confirmed, but the leading candidate is tentatively called the Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS). It would be more accurate, carry a more powerful warhead and have a vastly increased range of up to 480 kilometers (compared to the Lance's 125-kilometer range). Not so coincidentally, this is just under the lowest range permitted by the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, which bans all land-based missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

In addition, the U.S. wants to add a new missile to the European theater: the Tactical Air-Surface Missile (TASM). TASM will have a range of 600 kilometers, but since it is air-launched and not ground-launched, it is not covered by the INF Treaty. Unlike the ATACMS, TASMs fired from attacking planes could strike the Soviet Union, thus regaining NATO's offensive capability lost under the INF Treaty.

Meanwhile, the Soviets are showing some impatience as they propose eliminating nuclear weapons while Washington proposes building them. When Secretary of State James Baker was in Moscow in May, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze said if NATO goes ahead with the new missile, the Soviets might stop dismantling its SS-23s—a move that would violate the INF Treaty—or develop a new missile to match the U.S. weapon.

Nothing could have sounded better to the Cold War clique in Washington. The old battle cries resumed: "you cannot trust the Soviets"; "they are going to violate any treaty they sign, so the U.S. must eternally build up its nuclear stockpile." It shows that one threat is worth more than a dozen positive proposals and actions when that threat supports the right-wing agenda.

The Soviets agreed to include the SS-23 in the INF Treaty even though Moscow says the missile's range is under the 500-kilometer lower limit of the INF ban. (The U.S. says the range is just over 500 kilometers; the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute lists a range of 350 kilometers.)

*Pravda* reported that the Soviets agreed to include SS-23s, "although the treaty formally did not apply to them. The USSR gave this consent provided that neither side will be manufacturing or deploying such missiles." A Soviet official in New York said that consent was part of an "oral understanding," while a Bush administration official said, "I know of no such agreement.... Any oral comments are not treaty-binding." The Soviets quickly did back off their threat to break the treaty but might still develop a missile in response to the ATACMS.

Thus the Catch-22. If the U.S. deploys a missile similar to the SS-23, then the Soviets might deploy a missile similar to the new U.S. missile. But since the U.S. missile would be similar to the SS-23 the new Soviet missile would be similar to the SS-23. So when does similar stop being similar and start being the same? Since "similar" would not violate the INF Treaty but "same" would, this is not an academic question.

The simple solution to this problem would be to ban all short-range nuclear missiles so that the question would be moot. But that assumes disarmament is considered more important than treaty-bending, an assumption that the current debate does not allow.

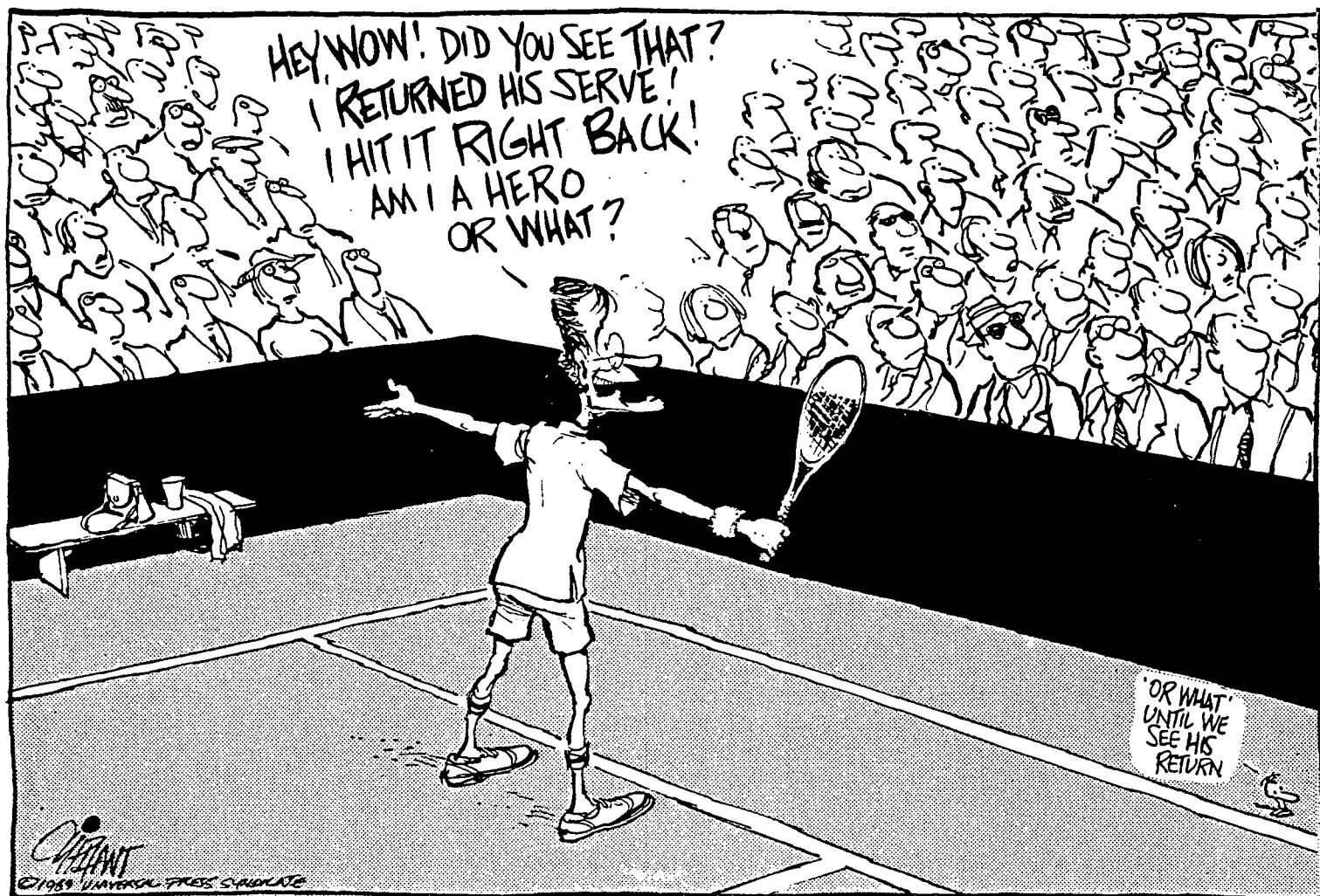
—Jim Wurst



# EDITORIAL

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"



## Bush becomes a peace advocate despite himself

In a deft effort to avoid the embarrassment of being an ineffectively vague president, George Bush pulled off a public relations coup at the NATO meeting in Brussels last week. Seeming to seize the initiative, he made a series of proposals that offered little but won him plaudits in the media for having a "vigorous new approach" and for putting the ball back in Mikhail Gorbachov's court. Bush faced two problems: to limit recent Soviet disarmament moves without appearing to oppose them, and to prevent the NATO alliance from splintering on the issue of nuclear arms in Europe. He appears temporarily to have succeeded on both, but his efforts were mostly cosmetic.

The Soviet Union has been pushing for arms reductions on all fronts, and has been particularly eager to stop the modernization of short-range nuclear missiles now stationed in West Germany. The Bush administration, strongly supported by Britain, wants to modernize these weapons despite overwhelming opposition by Germans to their continued presence in Europe. Urging negotiations to clear the way for the elimination of short-range nuclear weapons from their soil, German leaders have gone head-to-head with Britain's Margaret Thatcher, as well as the Bush administration. Bush's coup was a verbal sleight of hand that agreed to negotiations on the short-range missiles, but only after a conventional arms agreement is signed and implemented, and even then only for "partial" reductions. "Partial," the president said, means there will be "no third zero"—some short-range nuclear missiles will remain. This made Margaret Thatcher ecstatic. "Wriggle as some people may," she tweaked the Germans, "that's what they signed up for."

But the issue of modernization was left open. "The question concerning the introduction and deployment of a follow-on system for the Lance [missile] will be dealt with in 1992 in the light of overall security developments," the official conference text says. And given that it is extremely unlikely that any West German government will allow deployment to a successor to the Lance, which is planned for obsolescence in 1995, the issue will probably be settled by Germany on its terms. As West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said, "Out of the [United States] demand for an agreement on modernization without negotiations has come an agreement to negotiate without modernization." And he predicted that Bush's conventional arms initiative that is linked to eventual short-range

missile talks "has such a dynamic that nothing can stop it."

This view is based on Genscher's belief that the Cold War is over in Europe, and that the Soviets will do all in their power to come to terms with the U.S. And, indeed, the initial Soviet response welcoming Bush's proposals and characterizing them as highly positive steps support Genscher's view. In the old days of the Cold War, the Soviets would have pointed out that Bush's proposals leave the balance of terror unscathed, with forward basing of U.S. troops, predicated on the use of nuclear weapons, assumed into the next century. As the Brussels communique itself says, "land-, sea- and air-based [nuclear] systems, including ground-based missiles" will be necessary "as far as can be foreseen." Further, the Soviets would have pointed out that the U.S. all along has insisted that nuclear weapons are required to offset supposed Soviet-bloc superiority in conventional weapons. But if conventional arms are equalized—as Bush proposes and the Soviets agree—then by Bush's own logic nuclear arms are not needed in Europe.

In addition, the Soviets would have pointed out that Bush's offer to withdraw 30,000 troops from Europe—10 percent of U.S. forces there—was something already scheduled to happen as a result of a treaty cutting tanks and other ground-based weapons that is close to conclusion. The president simply turned a military contingency into a diplomatic ploy, but that doesn't make it a major step toward peace. And similarly, Bush's concession to the Soviets on negotiating for reductions on warplanes sounds good, but it specifically excludes Britain's and France's nuclear missile-carrying jets.

Administration hawks no doubt counted on an old-style Soviet reaction to Bush's disingenuous proposals. But the Soviets appear to have finessed this one, choosing instead to take the proposals at their face value and to use them to push for real reductions as quickly as possible. Of course, for the Soviets this is a lot easier than it is for the Bush administration. Military spending and the diversion of resources into the armed forces is a tremendous drag on the Soviet economy. Reductions in military spending can only help them overcome the stagnation under which they are suffering. And even though the military bureaucracy there is powerful, their political system facilitates such policy shifts.

The Bush administration, even if it wanted to reduce military forces and spending rapidly, faces more formidable obstacles. Unlike the Soviet economy, ours has been based on the waste of military spending ever since the end of World War II. As Alexander Cockburn points out (see page 17), it will require some basic rethinking about the nature of our society in order to end dependence on the military-industrial complex. This is not an issue the Bush administration is yet willing to acknowledge, much less confront.

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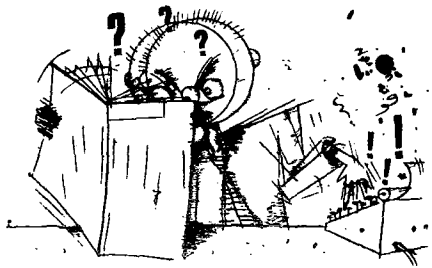
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# LETTERS



## Murder and the death penalty

MISCARRIAGES OF JUSTICE ARE INEVITABLE," reads a passage from legal scholar Charles Black's *Capital Punishment: The Inevitability of Caprice and Mistake*. One reason for this is a confusion of non-equivalent terms finding expression even in the pages of *In These Times* (May 24). "Death penalty" does not equal "capital punishment." The latter term is the more accurate; death can never be a penalty, only a penalty *plus* a degree of pleasure in the emotions of advocates as they gain libidinous satisfactions of their urge to punish, which I call "vengelust," and which psychiatry terms "sadism."

The death sentence, as Salim Muwakkil correctly observed, does not deter in any meaningful sense. However, it does brutalize, and he failed to mention any of the studies showing that in the jurisdictions where bureaucratic killings take place, and perhaps in neighboring jurisdictions as well, the murder rate is likely to go up by several hundred percentage points. My research indicates that in two-thirds of the cases, there was an enormous increase in the murder rate at the time of and often on the same day as the bureaucratic killing, and in *none* of them was the murder rate significantly reduced. Various rationalizations have been offered, but we should reject them all. What we need is a reduction in the murder rates, not attempts to explain away all our guilt. Since the death sentence only makes matters worse, we should abolish it forthwith, as all other Western nations have done.

If we can reach an understanding of why there is such a strong attachment to bureaucratic killing in this country, we might make a further step toward rational civilization. Karl Menninger, a noted psychiatrist, observed that hatred, the urge to punish or kill, is a symptom of mental disease. One of the results of my research, a comparative study of the personality profiles of death sentence advocates, opponents and death row inmates, confirms this diagnosis. The results were not entirely surprising; murderers and death sentence advocates—despite their religious backgrounds or "high morality"—show close similarities in many areas. Menninger might say these two groups of people share the same mental illness, with actual murderers, despite their lack of internal controls, having perhaps a slight edge in healthiness. The opponents' profiles were significantly different, showing better social competence, personal adjustment and generally higher intellectual functioning. The urge to kill correlates generally with low-level (normal for 10-year-old boys) moral reasoning and ignorance.

Robert Dann, a prominent sociologist, concluded from research that, on the average, each bureaucratic killing generates three to four *additional* murders. Aside

from other costs, if the approximately 2,000 death row inmates were to be ceremonially killed, one result would be that from 6,000 to 8,000 *more* innocent men, women and children would be killed than would otherwise be the case, as results of an anachronistic social policy suitable only for savages cavorting naked, painted and greased to the sound of drums, cymbals and flutes, serving and fueling the fires of Moloch with the bodies and screams of infants. If we are civilized and moral, we will not pay this price.

James C. Rogers  
Richmond, Va.

**Editor's note:** For the record, James C. Rogers is incorrect when he writes that Salim Muwakkil did not mention studies showing how jurisdictions where capital punishment takes place have higher murder rates.

## Bully tactics

IN SALIM MUWAKKIL'S ARTICLE TITLED "THE DEATH penalty and the illusion of justice" (*ITT*, May 24), there was a disconcerting aspect regarding the death penalty that went unmentioned. I am referring to the arbitrary power of the prosecutor to seek the death penalty for those accused of a capital crime. Overzealous prosecutors are able to intimidate and frighten the accused, who are literally fighting for their lives, into plea bargaining for a lighter sentence.

Certainly, one may argue that the threat of any punishment is intimidating, but the death penalty, as outlined correctly by Amnesty International and as reported by Muwakkil, is different because of the simple fact that it is irreversible.

People are more likely to admit to capital crimes they did not commit if they are made to feel by the prosecutors that the death penalty is otherwise imminent. This is especially true for a member of a minority or an immigrant whose perception of the justice of the courts is often distorted for good reason. The complexities of the court system are overwhelming for someone who does not speak the language or has a poor educational background. A minority person or immigrant also suffers, in many cases, from a low economic position that denies him or her the ability to mount an adequate defense. The public defender is often overworked and does not have the time or resources to defend the person in light of such serious "life-threatening" accusations.

This element of the death penalty is often overlooked because it is forgotten as soon as a plea bargain is struck for a lighter sentence. How many incarcerated individuals are victims of this blatant bullying technique?

Gerard M. McCabe  
Washington, D.C.

## Grunt's-eye view

PAT AUFDERHEIDE'S REVIEW OF *THE IRON TRIANGLE* (*ITT*, Feb. 22) belongs with Pauline Kael's *New Yorker* review of *Platoon*, which Kael viciously and stupidly knocked, ostensibly for technical flaws: "too damn much filtered light." The fact that Kael then failed to acknowledge that film's great achievements—for example, its breakthrough in dramatizing one of the crucial and unique psychic torments for GIs of that war—or to note the flowering of public approval of America's former soldiers, undeniable in the hushed attention of audiences packing theaters coast to coast for months, was a textbook example of something Myra Macpherson spotted in her book *Long Time Passing* when she wrote of "lingering, subtle and insidious indifference among intellectuals and shapers of policy ... a residual condescension ... a minimizing of the thoughts and remembrances of young foot soldiers."

Aufderheide starts out in this vein by trashing the filmmaker's claim to be telling the Vietnamese side of the war through the lives of the members of a Viet Cong platoon, because this is "just another grunt's-eye view." Who does Aufderheide think were in the Viet Cong, Hong Kong kung fu movie extras? Hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese foot soldiers, for a myriad of different reasons, lost their lives, or many years of their lives, and their stories comprise a national epic. Dismissing the use of their perceptions (drawn here from no less important a source than a Communist soldier's diary) as a "moral safe haven where sentimental values can be maintained, while bumping blame upwards to officialdom" would drain the lifeblood out of this epic, literally as well as figuratively. What is morally safe in the choice between officially sanctioned killing and showing the mercy dictated by one's conscience? And in light of all the hero worship of writers of Aufderheide's ilk lathered on the Viet Cong not so long ago, it's repulsive.

Continuing the belittlement of those who didn't, at the time, have the luxury of developing a historical/ideological perspective on the war, Aufderheide sneers that Capt. Keene is fighting "simply because [his] country called," in spite of the fact that thousands of U.S. Vietnam veterans cite precisely appeals such as President Kennedy's "pay any price, bear any burden" type of rhetoric as key in their decision to enlist or not to dodge the draft. Then Ho's (the V.C. soldier) "struggle for humanity" is devalued, because it doesn't include an explanation for the war! Compare MacPherson, who learned of the "poetry and depth" in this kind of experience, because she cared

enough to listen to returned vets, or Michael Herr, who knew because he was there with them.

Stuff like Aufderheide's review serve one good purpose, though: ensuring that some vets will refuse to entrust the telling and analysis of our experience to professionals. If the point that "even enemies are people" seems banal to them, we will work to ensure that, should another war come, their children will not view it from the distance that makes this response possible.

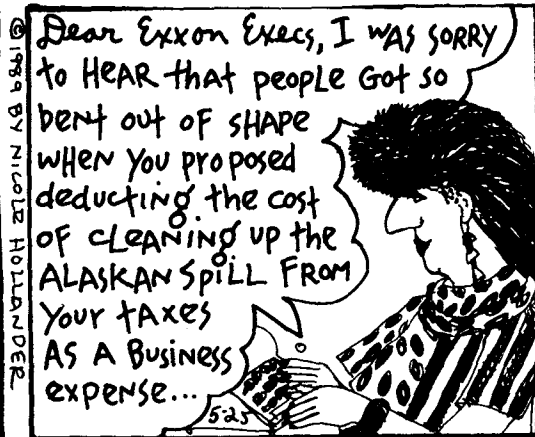
Gill Jacobi  
New Haven, Conn.

Pat Aufderheide replies: I am grateful to Gill Jacobi's letter for the chance to clarify what I said in my review of *The Iron Triangle*. Vietnam films since *Platoon* have, some more successfully than others, conveyed a grunt's-eye view of the Vietnam War as a metaphor for the American public's experience of the war. The people at the bottom of the heap, in this metaphor, faced moral crises and battled with conflicts of individual responsibility, while authorities above them failed to honor their courage, to provide moral guidelines or to carry the same responsibility. That is, to my mind, both a faithful reflection of a general sentiment in the American public of a betrayal and an unjust burden—a symptom of the decay of democracy in a consumer society, and also a reinterpretation of the war as a personal tragedy.

Movies speak to us emotionally, and the grunt's-eye films carry an important message about our loss, guilt and grief (not just vets, but everyone). But in a mass-mediated society with little public space, or patience in the public, for political discussion, they also perform the function of reinterpreting the past. The grunt's-eye view is a legitimate perspective. But as a partial vision that ends up looking like a total vision in the absence of diverse filmic perspectives on the war, it ignores the historical roots, the political framework and the social implications of the eventual debacle of the Vietnam War. This is not a fault of any individual film, but the result is a vision of the war as a personal tragedy that we can overcome through the grief process rather than as a historical, social and political fact with consequences for our social and political present.

In my review of *The Iron Triangle*, I attempted both to allude to the limitations of the grunt's-eye view and to point out the technical weaknesses of the film itself. Jacobi's comments suggest that I may have been too cryptic in my criticism, leading readers to conflate the two points. To reiterate, *The Iron Triangle* is a poorly executed film that depends on a sentimental view of soldiers from both sides and that buttresses its sentimentalism with blanket anti-authoritarianism.

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander





By James K. Galbraith

**T**HE BUSH ADMINISTRATION SHOWED some mettle in early February when it froze negotiations for the rescue of 350 failing savings and loan institutions and turned them over to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). Questions about the adequacy of the action were raised immediately, but there is now, after years of institutional musical chairs and billions of dollars in sweetheart deals, at least some chance that a once-and-for-all accounting and settlement will take place. If all goes well, the bankrupt S&Ls will be closed, their shareholders liquidated, their depositors paid off, and George Bush will be quit of the problem.

The political lessons in this action should now be applied to that other financial nightmare, the Third World debt. This problem is both larger and smaller than the S&L crisis. Larger because of the global scale: \$81 billion is owed to U.S. commercial banks alone by 48 "troubled" debtor nations, and that is only a third of the total bank debt (let alone total debt) of troubled debtors. But the U.S. debt is held in the main by only nine large banks, and these banks are so large and have so improved their earnings and capital in the U.S. economic recovery since 1983, that at most one or two are threatened by it, and perhaps not any.

FDIC Chairman William Seidman told Congress on January 5 that even if the six largest debtor nations now defaulted on all of their bank debts, not a single U.S. bank would be rendered even technically insol-

## It's time to settle the debt

vent. At the same hearing, Seidman's optimism was echoed by Federal Reserve Board Vice Chairman Manuel Johnson and by Comptroller of the Currency Robert Clarke. Outside the U.S., no banks are threatened by their Third World exposure.

**A no-loss situation:** Contrary to myth, the U.S. economy has everything to gain and almost nothing to lose from a comprehensive write-down of Third World debts. Our export trades, which consist overwhelmingly of capital goods, advanced intermediates (like chemicals) and agriculture, need the growing Third World markets that would result. We need the export trades to sustain the growth of our economy as a whole and in particular the profitability of our critical science- and technology-based firms. And we need the growth and profitability to help lay the foundation for higher future living standards and to reverse the current slide in our relative position in advanced industry as compared with the Japanese and Germans—who increasingly dominate trade in advanced goods in Asia and Europe. Indeed, the need for a growth policy is almost universally accepted and was incorporated into official rhetoric (the Baker Plan) four years ago.

But the narrow commercial interests of five or so of the largest U.S. banks are blocking the way with their political clout. For the Bank of America, Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Chase Manhattan, Chemical Bank and the chief hard-liner, Citicorp, a hard-line attitude is profitable. By holding out against "exit bond" and "debt buyback" schemes, the big banks benefit when smaller regional banks—whose main interest lies in getting out of the game—participate in the same schemes. The regionals sell back or exchange their shares of the debts (previously purchased from lending syndicates led by the largest banks) at large losses, and that improves the repayment prospects on the remainder.

Recently, Bank of America actually helped Bolivia design a comprehensive debt buyback at a small fraction of face value, but then tendered only 16 percent of its Bolivian exposure, while all of Bolivia's smaller regional bank creditors sold back their entire holdings. The limited debt-for-equity swaps the big banks do favor give them extensive control over real assets in the debtor countries. Finally, by stalling on exit bonds and debt buybacks, the big banks benefit from increased public sector debt relief and new lending through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as such actions increase the capacity of the main debtors to service their commercial bank debts.

The U.S. Treasury's role has consisted mainly in backing up the big banks. U.S. pressure on the IMF has assured that new stabilization and lending packages are not approved unless a debtor has first come to terms with the big banks. American political pressure comes down hard on debt renegades, like Peru, and in the internal politics of countries that are caught up in a debt debate, like Brazil. And increasingly, direct U.S. resources are being committed to assure the cash flow of interest payments to the big banks.

Perhaps a case could have been made, from 1982 through 1986 or 1987, in favor of

Reagan and Bush Cabinet member James Baker's approach of stretch out and delay, on the grounds that the U.S. financial system needed time to work its way out of the vast overexposure to the Latin debtors that existed in 1982. But such a position is no longer tenable. The U.S. financial system is not presently at risk from the Third World debts. Yet our growth of exports to Japan and Europe, the first fruits of dollar depreciation since 1985, is now slowing down, and we do need the expanding markets that debt relief would foster. Finally, we cannot afford to wait on this problem, for if we move too slowly, we may find new sources of financial distress (for example, commercial real estate over-lending) overtaking the big banks and once again paralyzing policy. Thus the time to manage the crisis has now passed; the time to settle the debt has arrived.

Debt solutions come in three basic flavors: voluntary, managed and spontaneous. Voluntary arrangements are much discussed but impossible, for, as we have seen, they fly in the face of the financial interests of the U.S. commercial banks, who will therefore not cooperate. The argument that voluntary arrangements alone would permit a return to "creditworthiness" in the developing countries is another myth. Under no imaginable circumstances are U.S. commercial banks going to resume Third World lending anytime soon, other than the present pseudolending that serves only to maintain a pretense of interest payments on old debts. The best that can be hoped for is, effectively, a severing of old bank-country financial relations, which would permit the countries to devote their export earnings to capital imports, and to cease diverting them, as at present, to interest payments.

A managed solution would mimic an orderly restructuring proceeding, as in a bankruptcy, on a world scale. For example, Japan and the U.S. might agree to purchase Third World debts from the banks at a deep discount below book value, with the degree of discount determined in negotiation between a joint governmental agency of the creditors and each debtor nation. Purchase prices might range from, say, 11 cents on the dollar (the Bolivian buyback price) up to as high as 30-40 cents. Banks would be "induced" to sell at these prices (which they would otherwise refuse to do) by the prospect of being required to write their loans down to an even lower price if they failed to sell. The joint U.S.-Japan agency would then exchange the debts it had purchased with the developing countries for instruments with a much lower stream of debt service payments. This would provide the necessary element of relief.

A true managed solution would provide maximum relief with maximum continuity and order in financial relations. It has responsible advocates, including Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ) and Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs. But to put it into place would require diplomatic, legislative and regulatory action on a huge scale. The U.S., Japanese and other participating creditors would have to form and fund a plenipotentiary organization. Negotiations with debtors on a Bretton Woods scale would have to follow. Congress would have to appropriate

resources, at least in the form of massive guarantees if not direct expenditures. And all of this would have to be done over the bitter opposition of the large money center commercial banks.

The spontaneous method would be less structured and harder to control. It might consist, in principle, of the following steps. First, the Treasury, Federal Reserve Board and regulatory agencies would brace themselves for any actions that might be required to maintain the solvency and stability of the banking system as a whole. Second, leaders of Congress might declare that the U.S. should oppose new World Bank projects in the big debtor countries under the general capital increase just enacted until the hemorrhage of interest payments back to the banks had been stopped. Third, the administration might then advise the major debtor governments that the national interest of the U.S. lies in a speedy settlement of the debt on terms favorable to renewed economic development and growth, and that the U.S. will henceforward work with the debtors, and not with the banks, to achieve such a settlement.

Such a shift in bargaining could be decisive. It would encourage the most independent-minded—and desperate—of the debtors (say, Argentina) to demand a comprehensive debt settlement (for example, a buyback) on favorable terms. Others might negotiate less drastic measures, such as sharp interest rate reductions that leave the book value of the debt intact but greatly reduce its financial burden. Faced with implicit U.S. approval of the possible alternative—a default—the banks would have little alternative but to agree. Such settlements would then set the terms for settlements in other countries. The problem could be over within months.

Treasury Secretary Nicholas F. Brady's plan for debt relief to Mexico may well be a first move toward spontaneous debt reduction. The Brady plan has arranged for a \$3.6 billion IMF loan to Mexico that is not, for a change, contingent on a prior deal between Mexico and the banks. A \$1.5 billion World Bank loan is also in the offing. These are supposed to provide "lubrication" (a partial guarantee of interest payments), and so an incentive for banks to accept reduction in the face value of the debts. But the crucial point is that in practice they strengthen Mexico's hand against its bankers. Mexico is seeking a reduction of up to 50 percent in the face value of its commercial bank debts.

**Snowballing:** Brady is only "slouching toward Bethlehem" at best. His plan applies, so far, to only one country. And even as they create incentives for debt relief, Treasury officials cavil about the absence of—effectively impossible—provisions for the return of flight capital. Whether and to what extent the banks will cooperate, whether a unilateral moratorium will follow if they do not, and the Treasury's attitude toward such an eventuality all remain uncertain. But if the Mexican plan signals a new U.S. official tolerance for tough action by the debtors to stanch the interest hemorrhage, then it will not be long before other debtors demand even deeper debt relief and an irresistible movement toward spontaneous debt reduction may get underway.

James K. Galbraith's new book is *Balancing Acts: Technology, Finance and the American Future*.

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## Saying 'No' to Gorbby: an affordable peace?

A couple of days after the people of Beijing turned back the army, and a couple of days before Mikhail Gorbachov was being verbally roughed up by the deputies at the People's Congress, who then elected him president, George Bush gave the last of four foreign policy speeches outlining the "grand strategy" of his administration. Like the previous three, it fell to earth with a dull thud. The lead editorial in the *New York Times* called it "flat and flimsy." Reaction in other influential quarters was much the same.

What bothers the *New York Times* and other exponents of elite opinion is mostly that Bush (hence the U.S.) is "losing the battle for world opinion." A week earlier the *Times*, in another lead editorial, concluded sadly that if a creature from space landed on Earth and said, "Take me to your leader," they would point him in the direction of the Kremlin and to Gorbby, who at that point was being hailed wildly by Chinese students as the emblem of their democratic aspirations.

Even Reagan confided, in a background interview with Lou Cannon of the *Washington Post*, that he was disappointed with the pace of arms control talks between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, in Europe, every NATO government is finding it increasingly hard to explain to the taxpayers why they should be financing large military budgets when the Russians are so visibly disengaging.

It's hard to know what the *New York Times* and the others would like George Bush to say, beyond speaking with a bit more verve. When he told graduates of the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., that "deterrence is crucial to our defense strategy" and then announced the old Reagan agenda—the switch of MX missiles to a mobile mode, the development of Midgetman and continued research into Star Wars, plus maintenance of "theater nuclear forces" in Europe—he was simply reiterating the fundamental axiom of the postwar capitalist economy of the U.S.: namely, that the system needs the underpinning of military spending. The less-developed and non-capitalist Soviet Union does not.

With all the talk these days of "an end to the Cold War," it's particularly important for people here on the radical end of the spectrum to understand this. If they don't, they will fondly imagine that it is realistic to talk about "conversion," about "jobs with peace," about a demilitarized U.S. economy, without understanding that to demand a "peacetime U.S. economy" is to demand something very radical indeed, and unacceptable within the present framework.

Throw your mind back to the end of World War II, the onset of which saved the U.S. economy after the failure of Roosevelt's New Deal. Demand pent up during the war years burst forth in a consumer spending boom. Corporations were fat with wartime profits. But by the late '40s the warning signals began to flash once more, just as they had in 1938. The economy was slowing down, and there were many who anticipated that the next decade would be a hard one.

The strategists of the Truman administration saw the danger. The famous NSC 68 document, drafted by Paul Nitze just before the Korean War, said the West would face "a decline in economic activity of serious proportions" without a government

stimulus through military spending.

In other words, the U.S. needed military spending and a deficit to stabilize demand. If you don't have these government-organized props under the economy, you depend on private investment for growth. But private investment depends on profit expectations, and these can be very uncertain.

Could the government have chosen some other form of public investment, such as civil infrastructure or public housing? As the Polish economist Michal Kalecki pointed out in 1943, it is logical to stabilize a capitalist economy with deficit spending to support public investment and mass consumption, but the economic principles of a capitalist government require that public investment has to be confined to sectors not competing with private business, otherwise the profitability of the latter might be threatened. Similarly, by their very economic and philosophic self-definition, capitalists do not find public investment in housing desirable. In fact, they bitterly resent all such "encroachments" into their realm of "free enterprise."

The course recommended in NSC 68 worked. The Truman administration inaugurated a state-guaranteed market for waste production, along with a public subsidy to advanced industry—thus speeding the development of the computer, which was originally underwritten by the intelligence agencies and the Navy.

Of course, pious folk recommend a war on waste, and lament the waste of war, which constitutes a double slur on two fine American words. The American system—capitalism—needs war (or the permanent war economy) and waste. Without the stimulus of war, mankind would not have had the production line (first designed by the British navy in the Woolwich arsenal at the start of the 19th century), radar, or '50s furniture (Eames developed his techniques for the shaping of laminated wood from the techniques used to make prosthetic limbs for servicemen wounded in World War II). An exception is the non-stick frying pan—the NASA program borrowed the non-stick idea from Corning to put on the nose cones of its rockets. We would not have the interstates, which were conjured into being under the Defense Highways Act of the mid-'50s.

**As for waste:** Our system is based on the production of commodities. If people slacken in their desire for and purchase of commodities, then the system collapses. We have an inherent puritanism that tells us not to waste. This is very wrongheaded from the point of view of sustaining the capitalist system of commodity production. If you don't throw it away, you won't buy a new one. If you don't buy a new one, the system will fall apart.

The system inaugurated 40 years ago has lasted more or less intact until today, surviving several "peace threats," though none so grave as the one posed to U.S. public opinion by Gorbachov. The military system has also, it should be pointed out, concretely protected U.S. interests around the world.

With the passage of time has come refinement. The money has increasingly gone into baroque elaboration of electronic weaponry, such as the vastly expensive Aegis system that failed so notably in the unfortunate instance of the Iranian Airbus shot down by the *Vincennes*. An aircraft carrier is of

## ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn

no actual military utility, since it would be sunk in the first three days of any war, as Admiral Hyman Rickover once conceded. But the whole carrier force—existing to defend itself—costs about \$30 billion, and this is very useful to the U.S. economy. The final demonstrations of the harmonious functioning of the system are the B-1 bomber, in which the only fully functioning part is the ejector seat, and the Star Wars program, which can never possibly "work" but which plows money into the system, just as the Russian launch of Sputnik prompted tremendous investment in the U.S. education system in the late '50s.

People, by the way, complain about "expensive weapons that don't work." What's wrong with that? Anything is better than a cheap weapon that does work.

In fact, the only downside to the whole Cold War economy was the difficulty of having a full-blown war, which cleans out surplus capacity. The nuclear age made this cleanout a bit too drastic. But there have been about 150 regional wars as substitute.

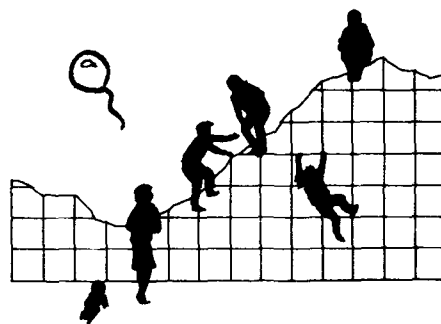
Now a common objection to this analysis is posed in the form of Japan. How can a non-militarized economy like Japan's be so successful if military spending is necessary to a capitalist economy? In fact, Japan's military spending is more than negligible, but the main points are that, first, Japan's is actually a planned economy, and, second, it is an export economy and the U.S. is its main market. The U.S. deficit helps subsidize Japan's growth.

So can this militarized U.S. economy be "converted" to peacetime use? It is not easy to convert "defense" plants, and even if you could, how many Grumman aluminum canoes would you have to build to match the demand created by the government subsidy for the manufacture of one Grumman F-14 and its sale abroad? The aluminum canoe lasts longer too, which is another bad sign. The Grumman bus fell apart satisfactorily when put on New York City's streets, but once again, the market was limited.

The answer is that you cannot have a "good" capitalism, with militarist underpinning. Take away that underpinning and it falls apart—unless you urge something else: like redistribution, a reordering of the priorities of the economy (away from profit-impelled growth) and the introduction of state planning. (In other words: socialism.) None of these are acceptable within the present system. To tell workers they will do better in a peacetime economy, without simultaneously telling them what this would involve, is to lie to them.

If the left is going to provide any vision in the years ahead, matching what is going on in the Soviet Union, it has to think seriously about what "ending the Cold War" actually means. Pieties aren't enough. But the vision is essential, because military Keynesianism is actually failing. In the '50s the deficit as a percentage of GNP was 0.4, in the '60s 0.8, in the '70s 2.0 and in the '80s 4.3. More deficit spending is needed in every decade to keep the show on the road. Even a \$300 billion defense budget is insufficiently stabilizing. So now is the time to talk about *perestroika* in the U.S. in truly realistic terms, and to make structural demands of the system.

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# LIFE IN THE U.S.



## Rural America: the great pains region

By Wilbur Wood

**A** SPRING SNOWFALL THIS YEAR made it easy to tell which storefronts on Main Street, Roundup, Montana, were empty: the stretches of sidewalk that didn't get shoveled. I walked over tongues of cleared pavement and tongues of snow, pavement and snow, on my way from my house to my mother's gift store to tend her coal furnace and shovel her walk.

Not that, lately, it has been terribly crucial for merchants to clear off snow for hordes of customers. No

hordes have come. Our small town's economy has deteriorated badly during the so-called Reagan Recovery.

"What recovery?" my mother always asks when she hears those words. After the recession of the early '80s, any improvement in the nation's economy was at best lopsided: wealthy people "recovered," poor people got poorer; bicoastal urban areas "recovered," but the rural interior withered.

As spring 1989 arrived, the Corporation for Enterprise Development issued its annual economic report

on the 50 states. By far, the weakest areas—no surprises here—were "the thinly populated mineral-extraction and agriculture-dependent states of the Great Plains and the Mountain West."

**History of rural blight:** Cleared of bison and Indians just over a century ago, the country around this town became range for cattle and sheep. Then came fences, a few grain farmers and the railroad, bringing miners from Wales and Yugoslavia to dig coal.

As the big mines shut down in the '50s, in came rigs to drill for reser-

voirs of oil. But now the oil is nearly gone. There's still plenty of coal, but that market has gone soft and the railroad that could haul it was gone by Reagan's first year as president.

Empty storefronts proliferate in the four blocks of downtown Roundup. On one side of my mother's store a restaurant is closed. So is the saw shop on the other side. Across the street, seven out of 10 storefronts yawn empty.

Part of the story is consolidation: the seven grocery stores of my childhood have become two supermarkets. Both of these inhabit big new buildings with large parking lots farther up Main, half a mile from downtown. Instead of walking to get my groceries—as I've mostly done wherever I've lived, in this town of 2,500 or in various city neighborhoods—now I drive.

Consolidation. Mobility. Contraction. The two drugstores of my childhood have shrunk to a single pharmacist in a glass box in a corner of the larger supermarket. Almost every other retail business category has undergone similar contraction.

Underlying all this? Rural depopulation, the movement of people off the land into cities. Especially younger people. Those who remain in America's dwindling towns tend

to be older. From Seattle, Denver, Minneapolis, their children fly home for reunions. And funerals.

What is worse, town dwellers and visitors alike more and more avoid Main Street, because they can't count on finding the right size or

### FARMS

color or price. It's hard for small independent stores to compete with chains like Wal-Mart or Target. People in my town can hop in their cars and within an hour be strolling a shopping mall in Billings (a city, by the way, with its own affliction of empty downtown storefronts). Dollars as well as people flow out of the rural economy.

**Less is less:** Government and industry sources tend to portray rural decay as inevitable. One federal report, titled "Technology, Public Policy, and the Changing Structure of American Agriculture," released in 1986 by Congress' Office of Technology Assessment (OTA), says that consolidation and contraction are happening fast. For instance, according to the report, three-quarters of the total food and fiber produced in the U.S. today on some 650,000 farms will be produced on only 50,000 megafarms in the year 2000.

The report matter-of-factly states that a million small and medium-size operations—which cannot afford to invest in expensive new biotechnological wonders or pour any more money into chemical fer-





tilizers, herbicides and pesticides—will simply disappear. And the rest of the people on the land will be "hobby farmers" with most of their income derived from outside the farm—pensions, Social Security, a job in town.

You might say, what's the difference, one big corporate farm or four or five family farms? The land is being worked. But there's a big difference within the local community. Corporate farms rarely buy equipment and supplies locally, often preferring to buy in big quantities from out-of-town distributors who offer discounts.

But at least the corporate farm simply replaces the former farm families with the same number of managers and laborers and their families, right? Wrong. Almost always, machines replace hands, chemical fixes replace good stewardship and fewer people live on the land. This means less business on Main Street, a lower tax base for the county and generally less involvement in local affairs. If you are connected to a corporation before you are connected to the land and the community, you tend to get promoted or shifted before you can really settle in.

**Virtue of diversity:** One reason to reverse rural decay, repopulate the land and revitalize our small towns is that this would take pressure off the cities: fewer refugees to handle. (These refugees sometimes need retraining, welfare and social services, but in other cases they are skilled workers who quickly put city people out of jobs—then it's city people who need retraining, welfare and social services.) Cultural diversity is the goal—cities can truly flourish only when towns and countryside flourish.

The OTA report envisions few people on the land. This mirrors

broader federal agricultural policy, which since the end of World War II has promoted the industrial model of agriculture. Big inputs—of capital, of fuel, of chemicals—to get big outputs. The obsession with production leads to factory farms and empty towns.

This same Department of Agriculture, however, is now emitting alarmed noises about rural decay. Suddenly, just about every federal agency connected with our town—Ag Department agencies like the Soil Conservation Service and the Ag Extension, and other agencies like the

## Crop encounters of the Third World kind have characterized U.S. farm policy.

Rural Electrification Administration and the Bureau of Land Management—finds itself with a mandate to work on rural economic development.

But the kind of "development" I hear talk of sounds too much like the "development" foisted off on Third World countries.

For instance, urged in the '70s by the Ag Department to "plant from fence row to fence row," American farmers eliminated shelter-belt trees, plowed straight through water courses and up and down hills, and increased agricultural chemical levels—all to raise grain for export markets. They saddled themselves with giant debts, then commodity prices collapsed, and by 1986 American farmers owed more money to banks and other lending agencies than three of the biggest Third World debtors combined—Mexico, Brazil

and Argentina.

Government scenarios for rural economic development typically involve abandoning family-scale agriculture in favor of factory farms, and abandoning small towns except for those designated as "regional growth centers." They involve retraining displaced farmers for jobs in cities or in these "growth centers." And they look to attract capital or industry or tourists—or all three—from outside, seeing development always as something to be imported and not to be generated from within.

**The import of development:** Of course, there are rural-based action groups that resist this scenario, and many of them sent representatives (I was one) in August 1988 to the Center for Rural Affairs in Walthill, Neb., for a weeklong seminar on rural economic development.

Riding the bus from Montana to Nebraska, I passed through town after town with its boarded-up Main Street and, on the outskirts, those big metal buildings put up in the '60s and '70s and called "industrial parks." Almost always these buildings were empty.

Yet in Walthill, a farming town of 800 on the western edge of the Corn Belt, the seminar itself was an example of a different style of rural economic development. Yes, we 18 participants came from "outside," but we certainly did not represent an influx of capital or an imported industry. We were tourists, sort of, but tourists there to examine the problems of places like Walthill, and we stayed with staffers at the Center for Rural Affairs or with other host families, in a sort of informal "bed and breakfast" situation.

This was a good way for outsiders to get a feel for the local community, and a good way for host families to meet interesting people. And after I got back from Nebraska, the group I represented, Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC), began running a series of workshops in Montana towns on farm-ranch recreation, as well as bed-and-breakfast opportunities.

Reporting on these workshops in NPRC's newsletter, Jeanne Charter writes, "What people want is what we have so much of: real hospitality, open spaces, a chance to experience animals wild and tame, and what it is like to live and work close to the land."

This is an attempt to build on the virtues of rural life, rather than imitating city life. The key is diversification (see accompanying story). You don't just raise cattle, you also raise horses for your guests to ride over the plains or into the hills. Or you can diversify in other ways, like the cattle ranch on the upper Yellowstone River that is also a thriving trout farm, or like the sheep ranch near Big Timber, Mont., that grows lettuce hydroponically in a greenhouse and markets it locally year round.

**Time of the season:** Horse camps, trout farms, homegrown lettuce—small signs of renewal in the

rural economy like the greening of the land in spring. As the last snows melted into the ground this year, Aggie, the 84-year-old owner of the Maverick Bar in Roundup, died in her sleep. Another empty storefront. Some days it's hard to believe this town will ever recover from Reagan's Recovery.

Ah, but the rumor of a big coal mine opening in the hills has charged up—and polarized—the town once again. Hoping for jobs, for bodies on Main Street, local business leaders revive the local development corporation, dormant since the last unfounded rumor that a mine was about to open. Meanwhile, ranchers grumble about how mines could ruin their wells and springs (coal is the aquifer, the water-bearing stratum, in this region, and mining inevitably draws down the water table). Other locals shudder at the prospect of giant trucks roaring past every 10 or 12 minutes, hauling coal 35 miles to the nearest railroad.

Oh, the coal here is good. Highest energy subbituminous, lowest sulfur content, lowest sodium, in the whole northern plains region. Maybe some power plant somewhere wants to

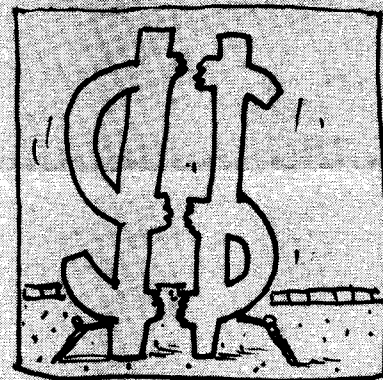
burn it, but there are other mines in Montana and Wyoming with coal nearly as good, and they have railheads right at the mine. And even those mines are having trouble selling their coal. And more people are aware of the costs—to earth, water, air and climate—of burning fossil fuels. These are realities of the "outside world," and local people looking to outside investment to save our local economy are not thinking clearly about these larger realities.

We can no longer renew our economies—rural or urban—by investing in non-renewable resources like coal. Nor can we count on short-term technological fixes to rescue us.

Economic developments for the long term will be based on renewable resources—on soil, water, air, the natural energy flows and nutrient cycles, and on people—or there will be no true development, only boom-bust punctuated decay.

A final reality: the urban economy squats upon the rural economy like a house upon its foundation. And if we allow the foundation to crumble, the whole house comes down. ■ **Wilbur Wood** is a writer living in Roundup, Mont.

## Development from the inside out



Diversifying rural economies need not mean importing a transistor assembly factory or a chicken-parts packaging plant. Instead, diversification can be homegrown, focusing on the land and its people and accomplishing two things: adding value to local resources and plugging leaks (of money, of people) in the local economy.

North of Roundup, Mont., the N-Bar cattle ranch has stopped spending \$25,000 a year to spray poisonous chemicals on leafy spurge. Instead the ranch earns a modest grazing fee from a neighbor who brings in his sheep to graze this so-called noxious weed when it is young, tasty (to sheep) and nutritious. A win-win situation.

The N-Bar also grows garden vegetables for ranch personnel and for sale to local groceries. Replacing imported carrots, potatoes and onions with homegrown produce is another way to plug leaks.

Adding value. Shearing sheep in this area, until recently, meant simply lumping clean fleeces with dirty ones and shipping them off to be sorted elsewhere. But now some ranches

here hire people to pick turds, dirt and burrs out of fleeces and to separate clean from dirty, and the ranch gets a premium price for this effort. Adding value locally has been carried further by one local ranch that bought an empty house and set up a literal cottage industry, employing some 30 people to wash, dye and spin local wool, then knit it into stylish hats, scarves, sweater and coats for a mainly urban market.

Such homegrown forms of rural development are not always carried out by individual or family entrepreneurs. On the Coeur d'Alene Indian reservation in eastern Washington state, a 50-member cooperative gathers salable herbs (many of them previously disdained as noxious weeds) in large enough quantities—and with consistent enough quality—to attract big buyers like Botanicals International of Los Angeles.

Another marketing co-op of two dozen ranchers in eastern Oregon supplies lean, chemical-free beef to health-conscious customers in Portland and other cities.

Authentic rural economic development is not imposed from outside, but it does not ignore the outside world, either. It can cater to the needs of tourists (for instance, in the growing ranch recreation market). And it must frequently focus on specialty niches—for everything from organic vegetables to hand-knit wool sweaters—in regional or international markets.

—W.W.



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## The Terrible Threes: A Novel

By Ishmael Reed  
Atheneum, 180 pp., \$16.95

By Fred Little

Ishmael Reed's latest savage romp through the collective semiconsciousness of America is a troubling and confusing novel, a fractal reiteration of the chaos of American life, a double-time triple take on the greed, cynicism, opportunism and barely disguised race hatred that has been ascendant during this bleak decade.

Picking up where 1982's *The Terrible Twos* left off, *The Terrible Threes* is the second book in what has been touted as an incipient trilogy. Like many such works, the book is not without problems. Those who have not read *The Terrible Twos* will be at times bewildered, while those who have may find themselves annoyed with some of the uncharacteristically lumpy expository synopses.

But this is a quibble, and one that could be easily disposed of by some minor editing when the time rolls around for the inevitable publication of the single-volume edition of the entire trilogy. In the meantime Atheneum is reprinting much of Reed's earlier work, including *The Terrible Twos*, in a new trade paperback edition, so the "problem" is really no problem at all.

*The Terrible Threes*, in the context of Ishmael Reed's considerable body of work, marks a major breakthrough. He has always been recognized as a first-rate satirist and dazzling stylist, a writer as capable of a brutal roman à clef as a deft genre knockoff. The downside of that repu-

# Seriously funny: going the Terrible Twos one better



© 1989 Peter Hannan

tation has been an often less-than-subtle insinuation of a flat, cartoon-like quality in his work.

**Going to extremes:** In the book at hand, Reed's characters are themselves clearly aware of their historical relationship to the "real" events and figures that are presumably being satirized, and, in each case, that relationship is by no means a

comfortable one. The relentless and labyrinthine succession of events in the narrative is as troublesome and confusing for its participants as for readers. Curiously, this begins to reveal the novel's deeper nature. It is less an extreme portrayal of the real world than a realistic portrayal of an extreme way of being in the world.

This quality should effectively

neutralize the kind of complaints about Reed's use of the roman à clef technique that reached a head in the critical reaction to 1986's *Reckless*

## FICTION

**Eyeballing.** In *The Terrible Threes* it is made abundantly clear that, for example, Kingsley Scabb, of the Newport Scabbs, is *not* George Bush.

Having made that point, Reed is free to lead the reader to the realization that even if Kingsley Scabb isn't George Bush, *he might as well be*. The relationship of the "character" to the "real-life model" is not the issue. The issue is the nature and effect of the self-serving lies such a

**The Terrible Threes is less of an extreme portrayal of the real world than a realistic portrayal of an extreme way of being in the world.**

person tells "himself" and others. Sadly enough, those tend to run to type; the recognition of that fact is at the root of both literature and modern psychology. It is no accident

that Sigmund Freud is best known for his appropriation of the stories of Electra and Oedipus.

But Ishmael Reed is more than simply an inverted V.S. Naipaul, allowing himself the ease of smug psychologizing that only takes to task the powerful and the conservative. By the novel's end, a trail of shredded delusions as wide as Sherman's swath through Georgia runs from the ozone-skanky subway tunnels beneath New York's Grand Central Station to the hallways of the White House. Moreover, in Nance Saturday, '60s black activist turned limo driver, authorial stand-in, interlocutor and straight man, the work as a whole finds something like a center.

Nance Saturday has kicked and been kicked around the block a few times. Yet he maintains a fundamental human dignity without lying to himself—or, more to the point, rooting out the lies he allowed to twist his own existence. Although that may be a Good Thing, Reed doesn't cheapen it by making it Boy Scout sweet and simple. Saturday's Thanksgiving departure from his ex-wife's apartment is affective and bittersweet.

Does this mean Reed has Gotten Serious? Reed has always been serious. And funny. Seriously funny. But if your cash is really too tight for a brand new hardcover book, paperback editions of Reed's *The Last Days of Louisiana Red* and *Yellow Back Radio Broke-down* should arrive at your local bookstore in the same shipment as *The Terrible Threes*. ■

**Fred Little** is a writer living in Palisades, New York.

## A Shallow Pool of Time—One Woman Grapples with the AIDS Epidemic

By Fran Peavey  
Crabgrass Press (3181 Mission St., Suite 30, San Francisco, CA 94110) 101 pp.

By Will Fudeman

MY FIRST EXPOSURE TO FRAN Peavey's work was at a party north of the Golden Gate Bridge. She and Charlie Varon were performing some "nuclear comedy" skits. I remember her portraying the founder of "Realtors for Social Responsibility," outraged to discover that a mushroom cloud would consist of former parcels of property, removed from the marketplace in an untimely fashion. And I remember her character Hermione Pledge, the New Age style creator of the "total body massage for world peace." As she squeezed down Charlie the interviewer's arm, explaining that the pain of various places in the world would settle in particular body parts, Charlie grimaced and moaned. Peavey knowingly explained, "That's Afghan-

# Helping keep the spirit of change alive

istan," as she squeezed the tension out of the forearm. The audience was falling over, laughing.

I later learned that Peavey was a founding member of the Mo Tzu Project, pioneering citizen diplomats

## AIDS

traveling to war-torn parts of the world in early '80s. Peavey had the gumption to sit in a town square anywhere on Earth with a small sign reading, "American willing to listen."

I read her book *Heart Politics* and learned much more about this Idaho native who came to San Francisco 27 years ago, involving herself in a variety of social change movements. A comedian with a striking voice, Peavey helped create a park for San Francisco street people and struggled against the eviction of aging residents of the International Hotel, and she continues traveling to India

yearly to advise a grass-roots group working on reversing the pollution of the Ganges River.

Peavey's new book, *A Shallow Pool of Time*, begins as a social history. Peavey started keeping a journal on AIDS:

...after a routine visit to a clinic sometime in 1984. In the small talk that sometimes occurs between doctor and patient, the topic shifted to AIDS, and my doctor expressed utter terror about the magnitude of the epidemic. I had never heard a doctor talk like this, and I remember thinking, "If the doctors are afraid, what is really going on?" It frightened me—not for myself, but for my society.

**Positive vibrations:** Peavey introduces us to her friends and relatives: people with AIDS and people prejudiced against people with AIDS. She reports on the growing sense of hysteria in the media and explores her own ambivalence about whether

or not to be tested. (Peavey had received several blood transfusions in San Francisco over a period of 10 years.) When Peavey discovers that she is HIV-positive, her journal becomes a sounding board for her feelings, a documentation of her search for accurate information and a report of her growing identification with other people who have tested HIV-positive.

She initially tells few of her old friends about her condition, experiencing isolation by living with her secret. She becomes aware of the dismissing reference to people "dying of AIDS," and urges us to realize that people are "living with

**San Francisco comic Fran Peavey's journal takes us through a variety of social changes.**

AIDS," sometimes for a decade, before they arrive at their deathbed.

*A Shallow Pool of Time* puts a human face on our plague of the '80s. Much of it is a journal, written without an audience in mind. Following the journal are some theoretical chapters, which offer an analysis of what is happening as our society adjusts to a new disease, and as people create a community to combat fear and educate others to safe practices. Peavey also includes a poem written for a friend's funeral and an eloquent prayer.

By giving us her journal, she helps us feel connected to her life and the suffering of any person who might discover himself or herself to be HIV-positive. Peavey writes that she "plans to live for quite a while." She continues to consult with social change groups, lecture and perform comedy. I look forward to seeing her soon here in the Bay area. She is a precious friend, and her writing welcomes each of us into an intimate understanding of one woman's struggle to find strength and endurance for the days ahead. ■

**Will Fudeman** is a San Francisco Bay area writer.



By Eric Lindbom

**A**FTER THE BEATS BROUGHT their syncopated rants from coffeehouses to watering holes, New York City bars became meeting grounds and performance spaces for poets, providing a receptive, artificially jolly crowd that might listen to a stranger ruminate—provided he was loud enough.

The sparks generated when innocent bystanders collide with art justify the creative process. Yet today's

## POETRY

New York poet faces monumental pedestrian apathy on street corners (in Washington Square the competition includes skateboarding Evel Knievels able to leap five garbage cans) or the incestuous, preaching-to-other-poets atmosphere of most readings. No wonder wordsmiths turn to performance art, rap or dub (à la Linton Kwesi Johnson) to cross over to a wider audience.

Bridging that gap is a chief concern of Bob Holman, who works in video, writes and directs plays and makes teaching appearances at city high schools. "I don't look at my job as just writing poems on pieces of paper. I'm an activist trying to use poetry to liberate the imagination," he says.

At a reading in New Jersey, Holman traded poems with Rev. Pedro P. Pietri, a self-ordained Hispanic street poet who types short poems onto tiny envelopes, sticks condoms inside and tries to sell them. (A Pietri safe sex haiku: "you and your bottle/ and your smoke/ and your coke/ are cordially invited/ to attend a party/ If you cannot make it/ send your bottle/ and your smoke/ and your coke/ to keep the party going/ until you are/ able to party with us!")

As the two writers unwound with drinks, an idea struck them. "You've got poets in schools, hospitals and prisons—why not in bars?" Holman wondered.

They posed the question—in the form of a grant proposal—to Creative Time, which funds site-specific art projects. The organization, under Project Coordinator Barbra Silver and Executive Director Cee Brown, agreed to underwrite a "Poets in the Bars" series of mostly free readings throughout New York City. The series was created to "celebrate the oral tradition, honoring the poets who are doing it now and looking toward the future."

**The last next thing:** When Holman sarcastically calls poetry "the last next thing," he's also observing that "poetry has always been a generous and inclusive art." Despite a vast knowledge of the subgenres of American poetry, Holman supports the assimilation of other art forms into poetry. He counts rock'n'roll, Dadaism and Spike Jones among his key influences as a writer.

So it's not elitism that makes him deride "so-called performance art ... a pretentious redundancy." That's just his way of standing up for those



Drinking it all in: Potable, poet-able —like a fish in water.

## Speak easy at the live poets society

who dare to call themselves poets (he once described LL Cool J with the "P" word, and the platinum rapper shushed him fast).

"If you scratch the surface of this series, you'll find many ways into poetry other than here's a poem cold—read it," Holman says. Some of the poets who read in the series fuse live music, found sounds and other aural stimuli with the spoken word.

Poetic justice prevailed when Allen Ginsberg opened the series at the Village Gate, a posh West Side jazz club. Ginsberg howled alongside a band that "ran the gamut from [Captain] Beefheart to blues to punk" (Island Records has slated an album of this stuff). Also appearing were Amiri and Amina Baraka, who read with Blue Arc, a jazz quartet that regularly backs them at the Barakas' own Newark, N.J., club. Amina read her poems alongside jazz standards while Amiri's were backed with scat singing and newer, more radical jazz sounds.

Bars were chosen as reading sites for their histories as literary haunts or to honor specific poets. For instance, Holman and Pietro searched for a bar near the Brooklyn docks that inspired Walt Whitman. After Five, a gay bar, volunteered its space. Three gay poets (Roberto Bedoya, Dennis Cooper and David Trinidad)

and one lesbian (Eileen Myles) read to a Sunday afternoon crowd of middle-aged regulars, fans of the poets and walk-ins from the neighborhood. "It was a magnificent reading hearing them speak the unspeakable in this crowd; it swept me away," says Holman.

**Liquid sanctuary:** A reading at the Lincoln Cocktail Lounge, a Spanish nightclub, was organized in honor of Maggie Smith, who once booked talent for the club Tin Pan Alley, a much-missed Midtown forum for ear-ringing rock bands, poets and other malcontents. Four poets Smith admires were picked to read (Kofi Natambu, Safiya Henderson-Holmes, Kimiko Hahn and Sharon Shively).

A similar homage, this time honoring a bar, was set at The White Horse, liquid sanctuary for Dylan Thomas and Thomas Wolfe, as well as Norman Mailer before his migration to Brooklyn. A big turnout required outdoor speakers that blasted the words of four Greenwich Village poets onto the street. Tuli Kupferberg, a member of The Fugs, a subversive hippie rock band close to Frank Zappa's heart, read with Bernadette Mayer (a poets' champion who regularly organizes readings in the Village). In deference to the once-boho, now gentrified East Village, the Nuyorican

Cafe, formerly a vital poets' space, re-opened for a one-shot reading. Holman wants to re-establish it as a nightly poetry club that doubles as an educational facility by day.

Series attendance was high despite scarce press coverage (the day Ginsberg read, the *New York Times* ran a typically academic piece on Yeats; too bad the series wasn't called Dead Poets in the Bars). More importantly, Holman claims more than half the attendees weren't regular poetry listeners. The learning experience extended to several of the poets who had never read in a bar before. Some adjusted better than others.

"At St. Mark's Church," says Holman, "it's so quiet that what a poet might take as thunderous disapproval is actually love between an ear and a word. My definition of a bar poet is someone who can stand next to the cash register while it rings up the mugs of beer, and whose voice rises above the splash of ketchup."

**Not high, and dry:** A sobering atmosphere characterized the reading I visited. The fact that seltzer was the beverage of choice didn't help. Perhaps a drink minimum should have been imposed for aesthetic reasons.

Still renowned as the bar that brought painters and poets together, the Cedar Tavern once attracted abstract expressionists like Franz Kline and Jackson Pollock, who drank with Jerome Rothenberg and LeRoi Jones (who later changed his name to Amiri Baraka). The scene blossomed under the guiding hand of Museum of Modern Art curator Frank O'Hare.

The mix of poets who read at the Cedar bore out Holman's theory that success as a bar poet can hinge more on performance charisma than the depth of verbal expression. With Jeff Wright the problem was timing. Wright, who edits a magazine with a poem as its centerfold, makes conversational phrases evocative ("Going on a trip? What to take? Valium"; New York is a "plunger of tears" where "the fabric of society unwinds"). However, he

**"You've got poets in schools, hospitals and prisons—why not bars?" wondered writer Bob Holman.**

paused after each pearl, waiting for a reaction. What he heard was a smattering of applause or a forced giggle.

Conversely, Don Lev, a twitchy Teyve with a Borscht-belt comic's delivery, seemed bar-born. A Village fixture for decades, Lev's long-suffering self-deprecation proved as endearing as his words. Rising to the spirit of the occasion, he reminisced about a solipsistic drinking buddy ("I miss John; now I have

no one not to talk to") and his personal drinking problem ("a bar is so much like a woman I sometimes worry").

**Nasty Mead whine:** Taylor Mead clearly enjoyed his celebrity bar privileges, fueling himself on Bacardi and Cokes. Another ex-Warhol scenemaker who makes a living from name-dropping, Mead pens tomes about his decadent past. He describes himself in the third person, as if uttering his fearsome name invokes an automatic amyl nitrate buzz. I'd scoff if this wasn't the '80s, the decade I'll always remember as the time when nothing fun was fun anymore. So Meade's precious ramblings have historical value, though he's not half as funny as Ondine—king of the Warhol queens.

Mead struggled through a tedious chapter of an episodic autobiography, skipping anything juicier than a reneged dinner invite from his favorite starlet, Beulah Bondi. He was better served just blurting out shards of imagery ("Eight million bucks is all I need for my junkie friends") and possessed a weird aptitude for boom-box osmosis; he kept turning his radio on at perfectly appropriate moments during commercials or Muzak ditties to intro each of his disclosures.

More deliberate in his sampling, Kenward Elmslie closed the reading armed with stacks of perfectly synchronized cassette tapes. The tapes, featuring music arranged by collaborator Steven Taylor, helped Elmslie realize his own theatrical vision of poetry, even though he only played snippets of Cajun music or a guitar ballad.

Artists who litter their resumes with slashes (painter/director/musician/thinker/masochist/etc./etc.), reflect our generalist era. Forget the glib nomenclature and call Elmslie a thespian. He writes and acts out his poetry, plays and librettos, and his pieces are operatic in tone, amplified by his quivering delivery. Elmslie mixes fear and joy with the same walking-on-eggshells trepidation as Pere Ubu's David Thomas. Though many poets are constipated by self-absorption, Elmslie is full of voices. A bar seems too tiny for Elmslie; he has enough ideas to fill an amphitheater.

While his presentation is "big," he compartmentalizes and subdivides his thoughts rigorously. Elmslie chronicled an "A-to-Z alphabetical crawl" through "26 bars" (the title of a collection of his writings). One piece was merely his rendition of the table of contents of a fictional poetry book. Detail freak that he is, Elmslie even invented the index of first lines: "Cranberry juice and V-8 come with the territory;" "It riles me when an attractive woman says shit." Melding music and minutiae, Elmslie never failed to enthrall.

All four poets at the Cedar Tavern, and the rest of them throughout Pietri and Holman's series, showed there are infinite modes of poetic delivery—and more than one way to work a bar.

Eric Lindbom is a New York writer.

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# Petroleum

Continued from page 3

tion is "too burdensome" for the oil industry and too expensive for the consumers who rely on the industry.

Willie Fonteneau, an environmental specialist in the Louisiana State Attorney General's Office, rejects this contention.

Fonteneau, who says that at least one-third of his state's Superfund sites were created by the oil industry's "non-hazardous" drilling wastes, concedes that a lifting of the exemption will create a very immediate and visible expense to many oil producers. But he says the short-term cost of properly managing the waste at its source "will be much, much less expensive" than the less visible, long-term costs of dealing with drilling waste once it has seeped into aquifers, entered the food chain and poisoned the human population. □

Jim McNeill is an *In These Times* intern.

## C A L E N D A R

### WEST LAFAYETTE, IN

May 25-June 11

Registration is now underway for the Conner Center tour to the Soviet Union, October 2-17, 1989. The tour will stop in Leningrad, Tallin, Minsk, Moscow and Zagorsk with special focus on the Christian community. The program will explore the theme of theology of worship with the Russian Orthodox, Baptists and Methodists. For more information contact Don Nead, Conner Center for U.S.-USSR Reconciliation, 320 North St., West Lafayette, IN 47906, (317) 743-3861.

### NEW YORK

June 8-17

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL  
THURSDAY, JUNE 8—Media, Education & Empowerment; Steve Brier, Chris Bratton; 8 p.m.  
FRIDAY, JUNE 9—Education & Equality; Stanley Aronowitz, Barbara Omolade; 8 p.m.  
SATURDAY, JUNE 10—Fred Frith, 8 p.m., \$6.  
SUNDAY, JUNE 11—Poems of Everyday Life, 2-5 p.m., \$3.  
FRIDAY, JUNE 16—Race & Class in the U.S., Noel Egnatiev and others T.B.A., 8 p.m.  
SATURDAY, JUNE 17—Performance by HOOPLA, 8 p.m., \$6.

12th national Intensive Summer School, with Harry Magdoff, Ralph Miliband and others T.B.A. Monday, July 10-Friday, July 21. \$200. Limited scholarships available. NYMS, 79 Leonard St., NYC 10013. Unless otherwise listed, admission is \$5. Information: (212) 941-0332.

### June 9

Ron Daniels, former director of the National Rainbow Coalition, will speak on "African-American Empowerment and the People's Movement of the '90s" at a reception/forum for Frontline's 6th anniversary. 7 p.m., \$10, Casa de las Americas, 104 West 14th (6th Avenue), Manhattan.

### CHICAGO

June 17

Soweto Day 10-K Walkathon, with proceeds going toward the legal and medical expenses of political detainees and their families in South Africa. Registration begins at 9 a.m., at the Hayes Center, 4859 South Wabash. For pledge forms, more info, call the Chicago Committee in Solidarity with Southern Africa (427-9868) or Church World Service (953-2767). The walk will be followed by a Soweto Day rally at the Hayes Center at 1 p.m. Rally is sponsored by the Illinois Labor Network Against Apartheid. For rally details, call 583-6661.

### June 17

The Illinois Campaign for Choice presents "A Rally for Choice" Saturday, 2 p.m., Daley Plaza, Dearborn at Washington. Several thousand women are expected to demonstrate that the American public will not accept a return to back-alley abortions. The Illinois Campaign for Choice is a coalition of more than 50 organizations statewide, including the Chicago Catholic Women, American Jewish Congress and the Women's Bar Association. For more information call 427-7330 or 922-0025.

### June 23

"A Rally to Abolish the Death Penalty," sponsored by Amnesty International USA at 4 p.m. in the Daley Center Plaza at Dearborn Ave. and Washington Blvd. Over 1,000 AI USA members, in Chicago for the 14th Annual General Meeting, will be there. Speakers, balloons, buttons, inspiration. For more information call (312) 427-2060.

### PITTSBURGH

June 15-22

Marxist Literary Group presents Institute on Culture and Society. Featured speakers include Gayatri Spivak, Fred Jameson, Samuel Delaney, Denis Brutus, Page DuBois, James Berlin, Alan Wald, Stanley Aronowitz, Barbara Harlow and Michael Sprinker. For more information call or write: Paul Smith, English Dept., Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, (412) 268-6447.

### LOVELAND, OH

June 24

Grailville presents the third of four "Saturday Special" workshops — Using Goddess Symbols: In Words and In Dance. An exploration of the beliefs and practices honoring goddess figures in different cultures and the feminine principle. Participants will share in movement, dance and ritual related to concepts of sacred space. Sally Walton is a consultant/trainer in stress control and cross-cultural adaptation and author of *Awakening the Inner Dancer*. For registration and additional information contact Grailville, 932 O'Bannonville Rd., Loveland, OH 45140, (513) 683-2340.

### SANTA BARBARA, CA

June 30-July 4

"Toward a Postmodern Presidency: Vision for a Planet in Crisis," featuring Steve Allen, John Cobb, Richard Falk, David Griffin, Wes Jackson, Ynestra King, Frances Moore Lappé, Amory & Hunter Lovins, Joanna Macy, Douglas Sloan, Jim Wallis, Roger Wilkins. Call (805) 965-6638 for brochures.

### CENTRAL AMERICA

July-August

Witness for Peace faith-based delegations. New England to El Salvador and Nicaragua, July 25-Aug. 12: Don & Anna Sibley, RR 2 Box 168, Sebago Lake, ME 04075, (207) 892-7446. National Delegation to Mexico and Guatemala, July 26-Aug. 12: Betsy Crites, 1414 Woodland Dr., Durham, NC 27701, (919) 688-5049. Michigan/Wisconsin to Guatemala and Nicaragua, July 30-Aug. 17: Marian Fredel, 1410 Drake St., Madison, WI 53711, (608) 266-6852. All delegations have space available. Contact local coordinators directly for details. Eight more delegations available for 1989 — contact Lucy Harris, P.O. Box 567, Durham, NC 27702, (919) 688-5049.

### NORTH HAMPTON, MA

August 10-13

The Center for Popular Economics is holding a conference on Progressive Economics in the 1990s. Aug. 10-13, in North Hampton, Mass. Includes workshops by CPE economists and activists on a wide variety of topics. Designed for activists and educators. No previous economics training needed. Call (413) 545-0743 or write CPE, Box 785T, Amherst, MA 01004.

### MIDDLE EAST

Sept. 23-Oct. 10

"A Pilgrimage of Peace," a Middle East study tour sponsored by New Jewish Agenda of Santa Fe, N.M. A unique opportunity to meet Israelis and Palestinians who care about peace and work together to overcome differences. 1989 cost \$2,000 inclusive from New York. Contact: Arline Goldberg, Rt. 14, Box 257, Santa Fe, NM 87505, (505) 471-4861.

### MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

November 2-11

7th Annual North America-Nicaragua Health Colloquium; November 2-11, 1989; Managua, Nicaragua. Unique opportunity for technical and personal exchange with wide range of Nicaraguan health workers. Includes teaching, fact-finding, tours. Contact: CHRICA, 347 Dolores #210, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 431-7760.

## Lover's Credo

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**THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!** Reports on the Alaskan oil spill, the sinking of the Soviet sub with two nuclear reactors aboard, Japan's taking of 240 minke whales all point to one thing: that the time to act on the issues facing the world's environment is NOW. Greenpeace Action intervenes physically but peacefully on these and other environ-

## C L A S S I F I E D S

mental issues, as well as employing grass-roots organizing techniques to build citizen organization against short-sighted policies. Join our canvass staff for the summer, or permanently. FT/PT available. Hours 2 to 10 p.m. In Minneapolis, call Jackie, (612) 874-0320. In Chicago, call Kerri, (312) 666-3305. In Ann Arbor, call Scott, (313) 761-1996. In Madison, call Rick, (608) 251-2661. In Cincinnati, call Beth, (513) 281-4242. EOE.

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## PUBLICATIONS

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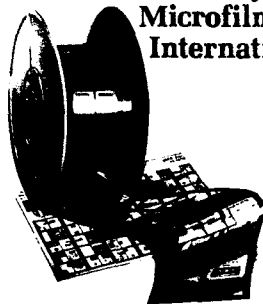
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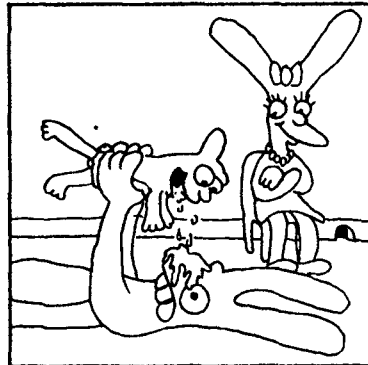
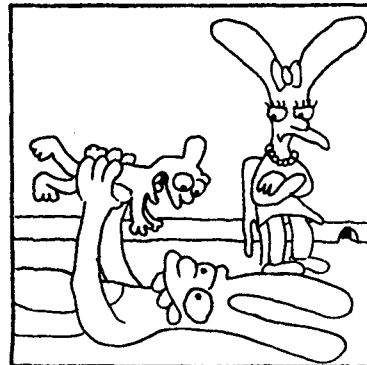
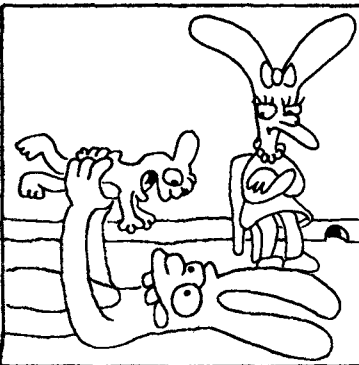
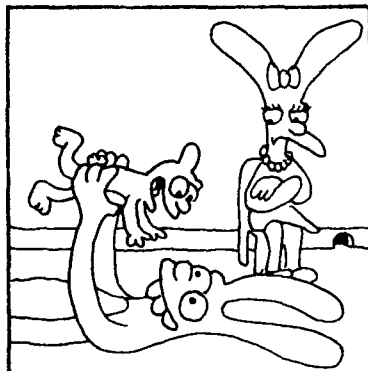
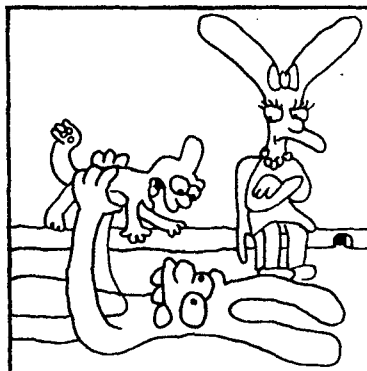
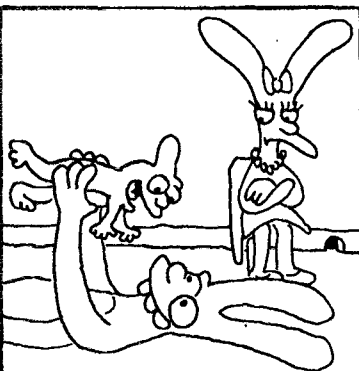
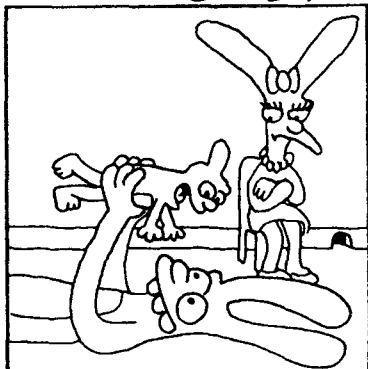
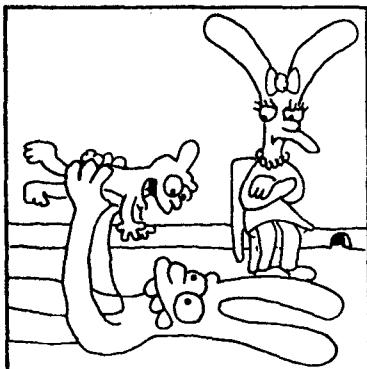
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# Summer Repeat



By Pat Aufderheide

**This is Sequel Summer** at the box office, and studio executives are already counting the cash. In a culture that prizes novelty over innovation, that treasures the security of brand names yet also covets "the latest," Sequel equals Success. Just think of it as more of the same, only different.

As one studio executive put it, if sequels don't sell, then this is the summer we'll find out. Watch for *Ghostbusters II*, *Karate Kid III*, *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*, the new James Bond film *License to Kill* and, of course, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. The long-awaited *Batman* isn't exactly a sequel, but it is a second take on a pop culture legend. *Peter Pan*, being re-released by Disney, isn't a sequel either, but it, too, has put down deep and tangled roots into the pop culture landscape.

**Filling the abyss:** Other big-budget films, such as *The Abyss*, *Casualties of War* and *Dead Poets Society*, are counting on sequel exhaustion to pick up customers. But the offbeat, the independent, the low-budget films (the kind honored in the just-finished Cannes film festival where American independent work took the honors), have largely been pushed aside. The big-budget summer sequels typically have guaranteed 10-week runs in the major theaters, which increasingly are owned by the major studios.

Still, the studios wouldn't give their big-ticket items such a priority if they didn't sell. And audiences love a sure bet. Historically sequels make about 60 percent of the original's gross. When you figure that *Ghostbusters* cleared \$200 million, that's a fair bit of change. Let's face it—in the summer, films are movies, not an art but a toy for the overheated mind and body. They're not making sequels of *Last Year at Marienbad*, now, are they?

Summer's the season for a potential hit; around 40 percent of annual box office comes in the summertime, with a hefty chunk of the rest centering on holidays. The era when people

Hollywood sequelmania is more than a seasonal diversion.

went to the movies every week is long gone. Movie-going patterns now reflect a nation full of two-worker families, with everyday leisure time in short supply.

But the sequel glut this year is making some marketers nervous. More than half a billion (yes, billion) dollars has been sunk into this summer's big-ticket movies. So the heaviest marketing guns have been drawn, and expert studies have been conducted to target audiences in an attempt to make the sequel a cross-commodity experience, one that moves out of the movie theater and into your life. In fact, the biggest spectacle in Sequel Summer may be the war of the marketers. (And in an era when "California raisins" products out-gross the raisins they were intended to promote, the financial clout of merchandizing tie-ins can't be ignored.)

Anyone who can still remember back to 1978 in the movies will recall that *Superman* hit the cross-sell big time with comic books, toys and in-store promotions. It wasn't just a smart marketing move but a symptom of conglomeration. Under the Warner umbrella were both the film studio and DC Comics, as well as Warner Books. (Since then, of course, Warner Communications and Time Inc. have merged; see *In These Times*, March 29.)

Licensing of commodities associated with movies is now a sophisticated business with its own trade conventions and magazines. And studios have become pieces of ever-more-

baroque corporate conglomerates. It shows in the ubiquitous promotions and licensing deals for Sequel Summer.

Oh, yeah, there are the trailers, the in-store stand-ups, the junkets. And record-high TV advertising budgets, which not only try to nudge viewers off the couch and into the theaters but also leave a memory residue for videocassette rental time. (The VCR revolution has been very, very good to sequels, since videocassettes keep original movies in the public mind long after they leave the theaters.) In cable TV, MTV is taking the lead with promotions, including ones that offer the chance to win the *Ghostbusters* Ectomobile and a *Batmobile* replica.

**Indiana wants me:** You won't be safe from the sequel specter when you leave the house, either. To lure the food shopper, supermarkets and convenience stores will be full of Indiana Jones-Pepsi Cola sweepstakes offers (win a trip to Venice!). On other shelves Fuji Film and Ralston Purina both have tie-ins with Indiana Jones, and Peter Pan peanut butter and Wonder bread are both co-sponsoring promotions with (of course) *Peter Pan*. At the fast-food joints Indy's got Hardee's, and Peter Pan claimed McDonald's.

You can also wear your favorite sequel affiliation. For the sporting look (Banana Republic, move over), try Indiana Jones Stetson hats and clothes. Or, in the slightly more fey line, check out *Batman*, *Ghostbuster* and *Peter Pan* cos-

tumes. Sears, which has a lock on Peter Pan products, will also sell a kids' clothing line.

Toy shelves are filling up with Peter Pan dolls and stuffed toys and *Batman* Nintendo games and walkie-talkies. There are also *Ghostbusters* toys that pick up on the TV show. And recorded soundtracks are hitting the music stores.

But even in pop commodity cross-feeding there is a point of diminishing returns. "You don't want to overcommercialize," Columbia's marketing director told the *Los Angeles Times*. "The idea isn't to meet someone who says, 'Well, I bought the cookware, but I don't want to see the movie.'"

Even if they do, of course, the profits trickle back to the conglomerates with a grip on the movie images. Some links are tighter than others. Columbia's *Ghostbusters II*'s tie-in with Coca-Cola is a natural, since Coke owns a controlling interest in the studio. Warner owns the *Batman* character in comics as well as the movie. And Warner Bros. records expects to do well with Prince's soundtrack, as well as a separate original song, "Batdance."

With cross-marketing on a scale like this, and with entertainment conglomerates rapidly becoming behemoths, it's no wonder that American popular culture assumes a cartoonlike quality, bounding out of our TV sets and fast-food containers. And it's not just entertainment; it's culture. In fact, it's going right into your national museum. Indiana Jones' brown fedora and leather jacket have just been donated to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, where they'll snuggle up to Judy Garland's slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* and Tom Selleck's Hawaiian print shirt from *Magnum P.I.*

So when you register to get your Indy Jones "adventure packet" at the local 7-11, just remember, it's not just movie hype; it's a little piece of your cultural history in the making.

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